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Inter-Arab Affairs

* Arab Fund Suspends Iraq, Sudan, Somalia

93P50079A London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 1 Mar 93 p 10

[Text] Abu Dhabi, London—The Arab Monetary Fund [AMF] has decided to suspend the memberships of Iraq, Sudan, and Somalia in the fund for defaulting on the loans that the fund made to them. Mauritania was excluded from the decision to suspend membership after it pledged to repay the balance of the loans that it owes to the fund.

Arab financial sources confirmed to AL-HAYAH that the board of governors of the AMF (the finance ministers of the member nations in the fund) made the decision to suspend the membership of the three states "in passing" [phrase as published] to avoid convening a special meeting for this purpose.

The board of governors had commissioned Isamah Ja'far Faqih, chairman of the board and director general of the AMF, to contact the states that are delinquent in meeting their financial obligations to the fund and prompt them to pay the amounts that they owed over a six-month period. The sources said that when the aforementioned peric 1 expired, Iraq, Sudan, and Somalia were not able to meet their financial obligations to the fund, while Mauritania confirmed that it promised to pay the installments owed on its AMF loans.

The sources did not disclose the amount of the loans to any of the four states. However, a report that Faqih sent to the recent meeting of the AMF's executive board of directors in Abu Dhabi disclosed that the total in arrears for these four states at the end of 1992 was about 146 million Arab dinars ($603.6 million), or the equivalent of 46 percent of the funds available for loans.

Faqih said he thinks that the problems of arrears is one of the toughest that the fund faces. "This unfortunate phenomenon leads to neutralizing and freezing a large part of the fund's capital, depriving some states of taking out any new loans and hurting other states that are qualified for loans but are prevented from using these resources," he said.

Palestinian Affairs

Hamas Envoy Sees 'Zionist' Pressure on U.S.

NC0303122293 Paris AFP in English 1127 GMT 3 Mar 93

[Text] Amman, March 3 (AFP)—The Islamic Resistance Movement (HAMAS) on Wednesday [3 March] accused the Jewish lobby of pressuring the U.S. administration into ending its contacts with the organization.

The HAMAS representative in Jordan, Muhammad Nazzal, expressed "surprise" at the decision, saying "the Zionist lobby has pressured the American administration."

He told AFP the Palestinian Muslim fundamentalist group was also in contact with other Western countries through their Amman embassies, including Britain, Italy and Germany.

The contacts were "not strictly protocol in nature but constitute a dialogue aimed at clarifying the movement's position and objectives," Nazzal said.

On Tuesday, the State Department confirmed it had held "conversations" with HAMAS officials in Amman but said the contacts had been cut off.

Department spokesman Richard Boucher refused to use the term "dialogue" to describe the contacts, instead describing them as "conversations with Islamic scholars."

The State Department is considering putting HAMAS on its new list of terrorist organizations, due out April 1.

Nazzal referred to his two previous meetings with a U.S. embassy political officer and to Ambassador Roger Harrison's refusal to take part, but said HAMAS was "still prepared to pursue the dialogue with Washington."

He said he wanted to hand Harrison a memorandum on the HAMAS position on the Palestinians deported by Israel to south Lebanon in December and on terrorism.

Israel says the more than 400 Palestinians it deported were linked to HAMAS or other fundamentalist groups.

Nazzal said he had presented similar letters addressed to the British, Italian and German ambassadors in Amman during recent contacts which were also attended by HAMAS spokesman Ibrahim Ghawshah.

He said his movement also sought to establish a dialogue with France, Russia, Japan, Canada and China and was awaiting their response.

'Arafat 'Concerned' at Hamas Contacts With Envoys

PM0303110993 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 2 Mar 93 p 3

[Unattributed report: " 'Arafat Concerned over Hamas' Meetings With Foreign Ambassadors"]

[Text] Amman, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT—Well-informed Palestinian sources have said that Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat has expressed his utmost discontent at the contacts made recently between Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] officials and the ambassadors of a number of Western states in Amman.

Elements close to 'Arafat said that this discontent is attributable to the Palestinian president's concern that

Hamas' influence is growing while the United States is officially refusing to resume the dialogue with the PLO.

Hamas officials have recently revealed numerous contacts which its representatives in Amman made with the Italian, British, and German ambassadors and with the political counselor at the U.S. Embassy.

The officials said that the movement also received offers from Israeli peace advocates to hold meetings with them following the murder of Israeli soldier Nessim Toledano, but Hamas did not respond to these offers.

'Arafat Predicts 'Balkanization' of Middle East

AU0303104693 Vienna ORF Television Network in German 2007 GMT 2 Mar 93

[Report by Hans Benedict on the conflict between Palestinians and Israelis, including interview with PLO leader Yasir 'Arafat in Tunis "recently," on the Auslandsreport program; interview conducted in English, with superimposed German translation—recorded]

[Excerpts] [Benedict] [passage omitted] 'Arafat claims that the escalation [of the situation in the Middle East] is the work of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin, who in turn stresses that he intends to do his best to promote the peace process. Peace in the year 1993.

['Arafat] He does not speak the truth. He does not want genuine peace. We should not forget that Rabin was the man who invented the occupation strategy, which he describes as an iron fist. Even some of his ministers said repeatedly that the death toll among the Palestinians, above all among Palestinian children, in Rabin's term of office has been higher than during his predecessor Yitzhaq Shamir's whole term.

Actually, Rabin is trying to neutralize the PLO politically. He intends to normalize relations with the Arab states, but not with us. We do not accept this, it must not happen. Palestine is and remains the main issue of the Middle East conflict.

Let us remember that following the Camp David peace accords, Carter, al-Sadat, and Begin said that as of today, there will be no war any more. How many wars have there been since Camp David!

[Benedict] It is true that more than five years of the Palestinian Intifadah have helped internationalize the Palestinian issue, but it has also hindered rather than encouraged the readiness of the parties to the Middle East conflict to hold comprehensive peace negotiations.

['Arafat] It is very difficult in view of this policy. Let me give you an example. Several days ago, Mr. Warren Christopher, the U.S. secretary of state, worked out a six-point program during his Middle East mission. Two points defined the U.S. Administration's responsibilities and competences; four points defined the Israeli position. Christopher informed our delegation that Rabin had personally agreed to the program and was only waiting for me to agree. What happened? No sooner had we given our approval than we got a very negative answer from the Israelis. Rabin rescinded his original consent. Nothing was done to advance the talks. Christopher also played a negative role in this respect. He canceled the issue of Jerusalem from his program.

[Benedict] The Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] fundamentalist movement, a rival of the PLO, not only agitates for an Islamic state in Palestine, but also considers itself the supreme arbiter over life and death. It killed 800 Palestinians on suspicion of collaboration with Israel. [passage omitted] My question to 'Arafat: Can he suspend the intifadah in the interests of unhindered peace negotiations, in other words, no throwing of stones, no shots, at least for a certain time?

['Arafat] First of all, Rabin must rescind the orders by which he is continuously escalating the conflict.

[Benedict] If that stops, will your people stop the revolt? Do you think so?

['Arafat] No, definitely not. The intifadah will continue, the demonstrations will be continued. The collective deportations are a war crime. They violate the Geneva convention and the UN Charter. But Rabin has said that he does not care. He says so because he has the U.S. Administration's guarantee that there will be no sanctions against Israel.

[Benedict] Every Arab house could be an arms depot. Hamas has arms depots. For the first time, insurgents have fired at soldiers. Houses are frequently searched. [passage omitted]

['Arafat] Rabin will always have the continuous and unlimited support of the U.S. Administration.

[Benedict] Are you still willing to accept limited autonomy as an interim solution until a definite solution has been found?

['Arafat] Yes, but only for a short time. The other side says that it will be for several years. I say it should be no more than one year. We have informed the other side accordingly. As you know, we agreed in the Palestinian parliament that we will form a confederation with the Kingdom of Jordan—a confederation of Jordanians and Palestinians.

[Benedict] If nothing is settled in one or two months, if the Palestinians stay away from the peace negotiations and therefore the other Arab delegations stay away, what will happen?

['Arafat] If peace is not implemented, there will be total chaos in the region, because this can only spell the Balkanization of the Middle East. I am, I can, I am a pragmatic man. I am seeing it quite clearly. There will be total chaos and Balkanization. [passage omitted]

PLO Statement Assails Blockade of Gaza Strip

LD0203204793 Algiers Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1900 GMT 2 Mar 93

["Text" of PLO communique on Israeli blockade against people in the Gaza Strip]

[Text] The Rabin government has decided to impose a comprehensive blockade on the Gaza Strip and to isolate it from the rest of the world. This decision, which is a big crime perpetrated by the occupation authorities, constitutes a new style of collective punishment against hundreds of thousands of our people in brave and steadfast Gaza. It is a step which aims to consolidate the Rabin government's policy of blockading our people in the Strip into starvation and to pave the way for a new series of collective terrorism, which was launched a few weeks ago in many parts of our steadfast Strip and in the rest of the occupied Palestinian territories.

The PLO draws the attention of the whole world to the extreme gravity of the Israeli decision, which seeks to complete the plan of terrorism and collective punishment initiated by the Rabin government, which kills and wounds hundreds of women and children, and shells peaceful dwellings with air missiles in Khan Yunus, Gaza, the West Bank, and the Palestinian camps in various parts of heroic Gaza and the steadfast West Bank.

By perpetrating this new crime, first embarked upon a few weeks ago without any reason or pretext, the Rabin government is trying today to fulfill its terrorist objectives within the framework of a policy which has sought to bring our people to its knees, to implement terrorism as a reality, to hinder the peace process, and to set up further obstacles, ever since it deported hundreds of Palestinian citizens outside their homeland.

The PLO is following this grave development at all levels and will call on the various Arab and international bodies concerned to take urgent steps to halt this Israeli cycle of continuous terrorism and collective punishment and to provide protection for hundreds of thousands of our struggling people in the occupied homeland in implementation of the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention and of all other international charters and resolutions.

The enemy prime minister, Yitzhaq Rabin, yesterday stressed that his government will temporarily close down the occupied Gaza Strip after two Israelis and seven others were injured in Tel Aviv by a Palestinian from the Gaza Strip. He added that Israel will take measures to isolate the Gaza Strip for some time without giving any indications on the measures intended.

Israel-'Arafat Dialogue Linked to PLO Existence

PM0303125793 London AL-WASAT in Arabic 1-7 Mar 93 p 1

[Unattributed report: "From our Sources"]

[Text] An Israeli figure who visited Tunis recently and held talks with a number of Palestinian leaders advised a senior Palestinian official to adopt a "historic decision" stipulating "the dissolution of the PLO, its removal from existence, and its replacement by another Palestinian body in the form of a provisional government or anything else," on the grounds that that would be bound to facilitate a "high-level" dialogue between that Palestinian body and the Israeli Government. The figure pointed out that "no Israeli government will accept Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat's calls for a dialogue unless 'Arafat removes the PLO from existence."

U.S. Said 'Backtracking' on Palestinian Proposals

PM0103105193 London AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI in Arabic 26 Feb 93 p 11

[Editorial: "Serious U.S. Backtracking"]

[Text] The United States has backtracked on the proposals it submitted to the Palestinian delegation during the latter's meeting with Secretary of State Warren Christopher the day before yesterday to remove the obstacles preventing Palestinian participation in the peace negotiations. This backtracking came in a message which the Russian ambassador in Tunis delivered to Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat.

The Russian partner's role in sponsoring the peace negotiations has been reduced to carrying negative U.S. messages to the Palestinians, instead of using its influence and capabilities to put pressure on Washington and Israel to achieve the required balance. If we examine the "withdrawn" U.S. proposals, we find that they add nothing new to the clauses and spirit of UN Security Council Resolution 799, which demands a halt to the Israeli deportation policy, the return of the Palestinian deportees in southern Lebanon, and the protection of Palestinian human rights in the occupied territories.

The question which should be asked is not: Why did the United States withdraw these proposals and duck its agreement with the negotiating Palestinian delegation? It is: What does the U.S. Administration want from this step?

The reason for withdrawing these proposals is clear, namely that Yitzhaq Rabin's government stuck firmly to the deal it concluded with the Clinton administration on the deportees and which stipulates the immediate return of 100 of them, delaying the others' return until the end of the year. And it does not want to pledge to stop the deportation policy, which is a central element of Zionist strategy.

Israel's establishment was based in the first place on the policy of deporting the Arabs of Palestine and replacing them with Jews. And it is currently pursuing a policy of ethnic cleansing in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, be it through deportations, the intensification of settlement building, or the escalation of repression against inhabitants. And it is most likely that the U.S. Administration

was subjected to Israeli pressures, not vice versa, and thus decided to separate the negotiation process and the deportees' return and to go ahead and send the invitations to resume the bilateral negotiations in Washington in April.

What is certain is that Christopher secured all the Arab parties' agreement to return to the negotiating table without conceding any of the terms of the U.S.-Israeli deal on the deportees. And it seems that the Palestinian side was the only party which insisted that this question be resolved before the resumption of the negotiations.

By withdrawing these proposals and sending the invitations to resume the negotiations without resolving the deportees issue the U.S. secretary of state is seeking to exert direct pressure on the Arab parties, in particular the Palestine side, and put them in a position in which they cannot refuse.

This is because refusal to go to the negotiating table would mean holding the Arabs, the Palestinians in particular, responsible for the collapse of the peace process—an objective which serves Israel and achieves the aims for which it has been working since the Madrid conference.

But going to the negotiating table does not mean the achievement of a settlement close to Arab views, unless some Arab parties have received undeclared U.S. guarantees that separate peace agreements would be achieved and thus rushed to agree to resume the negotiations.

Christopher Optimism at Odds With Talks 'Crisis'

PM0303091393 London AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI in Arabic 27-28 Feb 93 p 11

[Editorial: "A Minimum of Dignity Required"]

[Text] There have been contradicting views and positions vis-a-vis U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's invitation to resume the bilateral peace negotiations in Washington in the second half of April. While the Israelis welcomed it, more than one Arab party voiced reservations about it. Most of these reservations came from the Palestinians.

The PLO postponed a leadership meeting which was scheduled for Monday [1 March] to discuss a draft agreement reached between the U.S. secretary of state and the Palestinian delegation in Jerusalem, after U.S. backtracking on this draft agreement.

As for Syria, it stressed yesterday through its Foreign Minister Farug al-Shar' that it will be difficult to go to the negotiations before the deportees issue is resolved. It also announced that it will host an Arab meeting for the states participating in the negotiations in order to discuss ways of reviving the inactive peace process in the Middle East and resolve the deportees issue.

Certainly the meeting in question will be necessary for coordinating Arab positions on the U.S. invitation and for agreeing on a unified formula for a solution to the deportees issue—a formula that guarantees their return in accordance with a specific timetable and on the basis of an Israeli pledge first to renounce the deportation policy and to implement UN Security Council Resolution 799.

The invitation to such a meeting should have been made—as is customary—before Christopher's tour of the region, but the parties concerned wanted to act independently in their dealing with the new U.S. secretary of state, and they did what they wanted.

The interpretation of all these movements—be it the meeting held between Christopher and Al-Shar' in Brussels, which resulted in the invitation to the Arab meeting; Moscow's invitation to a Palestinian delegation to visit; or the urgent messages which Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat is receiving these days from more than one Arab capital—can be summed up in a simple sentence, namely that there is a real crisis which Christopher's tour has failed to settle and which is preventing the resumption of the negotiations, contrary to all the optimistic statements made by the U.S. secretary of state.

The key to the resumption of the negotiations is in the hands of the Palestinian leadership in Tunis, which is why the Palestinian delegation must go to the negotiations in order for the others to go. Any party which believes otherwise is completely mistaken. Perhaps for this reason Christopher expressed his hope that the Syrians would persuade the Palestinians to go to the negotiations like the others. When the Palestinian leadership insists on the the need to resolve the deportees issue before the the resumption of the negotiations, it is putting the interests of its people and cause above any other consideration. It is not interested in the success or failure of Christopher's tour as much as it is interested in putting an end to the deportations and Israelis repression against innocent people in the occupied Arab territories.

And if there are Arab and U.S. pressures, they should be aimed against the party which created the deportees crisis and is practicing murder in the occupied territories daily, not against the victims of these practices.

It is regrettable that a common thing these days is for concessions to be demanded from the Arabs and the Palestinians to save the Rabin government's face and boost the U.S. Administration's efforts in the region. We believe that the time is now favorable to overturn this unfair, boring equation by adopting a stern Arab position that insists on the need to return all the deportees and implement Security Council Resolution 799.

The peace negotiations are the means to secure a fair implementation of the resolutions of international legitimacy. If the most recent resolution of this legitimacy is interpreted in such a manner, how can other resolutions, demanding not the deportees' return but the return of the land to its owners, be implemented?

Internecine Killings in Territories Denounced

TA0203163493 Jerusalem AL-NAHAR in Arabic 2 Mar 93 pp 1, 7

[Editorial: "A Self-Appraisal Is Necessary"]

[Excerpts] At a time when the occupied territories are witnessing an escalation of Israeli practices, another kind of violence has appeared on the other side manifested in the killing of Palestinians by their Palestinian brothers. What we are doing to each other harms our sacred cause much more than what Israel does. How can we tell the world about the killing of children and old people by Israel when what we are doing to ourselves makes what Israel does marginal in the eyes of the world? How can the world sympathize with us when "the hysteria" among us has reached the stage of confrontation between brothers? Isn't it logical for the world to close its eyes, ears, and mouths in the face of what Israel is doing to our people? We ask one more time: Will this self-destruction not lead to marginalizing the Palestinian cause and converting it into "a civil war" between factions of a single society under occupation? Nothing will serve the occupation more than killing our cause in this way. [passage omitted]

The alarm has now been sounded. Those among our people who are shutting off their minds bear responsibility for what is happening today in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. One must not remain silent to the violence that we are practicing against ourselves. Some of us are closing our eyes to these facts and incidents because it requires a stance that might not be pleasant. The developments that we are witnessing generate their own repercussions. We have to be resolute in expressing our rejection of what is taking place. If we do not support each other while under occupation, how will the situation be after liberation from occupation? What is important is not ringing slogans but the daily practices among our people, who have been burned for generations by the fire of torture and coercion, until we have reached this tragic situation. Today, the voices complaining against these excesses and fear are rising. What our society is being subjected to will lead to the destruction of all the achievements realized by the Palestinian people, and we will come out of this process empty-handed.

All Palestinian, national, and Islamic forces feel that our cause is being endangered. There is need for a broader vision to save our people from themselves. Before hoping to liberate the land, we have to liberate ourselves and restore affection and harmony among our people, who should be elevated to the level of cohesive militancy. The Palestinian street welcomes and blesses every step in this direction and looks forward, following much disappointment, to further cohesion and Palestinian national unity in confronting the infighting. The Palestinian leadership bears a heavy responsibility. It must contain this fire before it gets out of control and burns everything. [passage omitted]

Palestinian Negotiator Cannot Cross 'Red Lines'

TA0203144493 Jerusalem AL-USBU' AL-JADID in Arabic 28 Feb 93 p 3

[Editorial: "There Is a Limit"]

[Text] When Rabin made the decision to deport more than 400 Palestinians, he resorted to the Israeli public to obtain its approval on his decision. Opinion polls indicated that 90 percent of Israelis were in favor of the deportation decision.

If we were to conduct an opinion poll about the position of the Palestinian public in the occupied territories on the resumption of negotiations while the deportees remain in the Marj al-Zuhur camp, the ratio would be the same, if not more, against resumption.

A leadership that respects itself should respect the opinion of the public that it represents. It is inconceivable for the Palestinian negotiator to go to the negotiations amid this charged atmosphere, contrary to the view of the Palestinian public. His going would mean bestowing legitimacy on deportation despite its contravention of human rights and international legitimacy.

Recently a tone has appeared giving the impression of abandoning the principled position calling for implementation of Security Council Resolution 799.

Moreover, perhaps the U.S. side's announcement of its intention to issue invitations for the bilateral negotiations in Washington in April came to embarrass the Palestinians and exert pressure on them.

Even if the Arab parties respond to this invitation, the Palestinians will not be able to do so.

We might lose a round of negotiations, but we will gain the unity of our people. The Palestinians and the Americans must understand that the Palestinian negotiator has red lines, relating to the Palestinian people's basic rights, which cannot be crossed. Crossing those lines would be a prelude to renouncing the Palestinian people's legitimate rights.

This situation would deprive any Palestinian negotiator of his credibility before his people.

Egyptian Envoy's Visit to Israel Viewed

TA0203181793 Jerusalem AL-QUDS in Arabic 2 Mar 93 p 9

[Editorial: "Al-Baz Visit—A Test of the Egyptian Role in the Peace Process"]

[Text] The visit by Dr. Usamah al-Baz, Egyptian President Husni Mubarak's adviser for political affairs, to Israel has special significance—without mentioning names—to all the parties concerned in the resumption of the peace talks, because the motives behind this visit are interlinked. Egypt is keen on resolving the crisis of the Palestinian deportees as a prelude to the resumption of

the talks because their suspension will not broaden the circle of peace, confined currently only to Egypt and Israel.

In the era of its new administration, the United States, one of the cosponsors of the peace process, is eager that the Clinton administration score some points in the foreign policy realm even though those points do not seem simple now after the region's climate has been disrupted by the negative effects of the deportee issue.

Israel, too, whose government painted itself into a corner when it adopted the collective deportation decision, is in need of giving the outward impression that it is not responsible for the suspension of the peace talks. Every day that passes without implementation of Resolution 799 is seen as persistence by Israel to disregard the resolutions of international legitimacy—something Israel could not have done without U.S. tolerance toward it.

On the Palestinian level, as the PLO and the negotiating delegation have announced, the resumption of talks at the date set by the U.S. and Russian foreign ministers seems inconceivable in light of the deportee issue. Even if the other three Arab parties decide to go to the talks without the Palestinians, the talks will have no effectiveness or meaning, bearing in mind that those parties have yet to declare their intention to do so.

Al-Baz's visit, then, was a test of the peaceful Egyptian-Israeli relations, which are crucial for both sides. It is premature to talk about the success of this visit, because we have to wait for a modification or change in the Israeli stance toward the deportees that might emanate from the visit. This has not happened yet, although our hope is that the Egyptian president's adviser relayed to Israeli officials effective demands for repatriating the deportees in accordance with Resolution 799 and that the Israeli Government—at least out of concern for its peaceful relations with Egypt—would respond to those demands.

Jordanian Paper Reports Murder of PFLP Member

JN0103105593 Amman SAWT AL-SHA'B in Arabic 1 Mar 93 pp 1, 19

[Text] Amman—Unidentified persons stormed the house of 'Abd-al-Hamid Muhammad Salman Khalayifah, 30, a member of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine [PFLP], in the al- Baq'ah area at midnight the day before yesterday. Khalayifah had been tied up and strangled in his room. His body was found in a sack in one of the back streets of al-Baq'ah.

The competent Public Security organs are searching for the culprits.

New West Bank Palestinian Party Viewed

JN0203085293 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 2 Mar 93 p 2

[By JORDAN TIMES staff reporter Maryam M. Shahin]

[Text] Amman—The upcoming inauguration of the first political party in the occupied territories will mark the beginning of a transfer of political power from Palestinians in exile to those living under occupation, Palestinian observers said this week after an organisational meeting of the party leadership concluded in Amman.

The Palestinian Democratic Federation, a group of independents, centrists and former members of Fatah and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) as well as several other mostly left wing groups have formed what they claim will be "the" secular-centrist party in the occupied territories.

Known by the acronym FIDA, the group is headed at this interim stage by a Jerusalem-based former political prisoner and DFLP member, Sam'an Khuri.

Mr. Khuri has many of the characteristics that are particular to FIDA. Since he began his political activities he joined the DFLP, when it was the only Palestinian group with any popular support to call for coexistence with Israel, i.e. a two-state solution along the lines of U.N. Resolution 181.

In 1988 he was charged by Israeli authorities of being a leader of the Unified Leadership of the Intifadah and sentenced to four years imprisonment.

While in jail he followed political events in the occupied territories as well as in Tunis, where the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) leadership is based. When the DFLP split in September 1991, Mr. Khuri decided to join the Tunis-based branch which was led by Yasir 'Abd-Rabbuh former deputy to DFLP chief Nayif Hawatimah.

"Facts on the ground do change and the DFLP has, on the whole, always adapted to those changes, Mr. Khuri said. "The people under occupation have to face up to the change and have to live with Israel and the Israelis. That's why the majority of the DFLP members in the occupied territories backed the Tunis-based faction. The policies it was proposing were closer to reality than the policies drawn up in Damascus," he explained in an interview with the Jordan Times.

At the time of the split DFLP members in Tunis also called for sharing of decision-making responsibilities with people in the occupied territories.

"People in the territories look at the democracy that the Jews have in Israel... We too want the man in the street to have a voice. The archaic centralised decision-making system is a thing of the past," Mr. Khuri said.

It was the intifadah, says a Tunis-based adviser to Mr. 'Arafat, that launched the "evolutionary process of the

eventual transfer of power from outside the boundaries of Palestine to within those boundaries."

"The 'popular' struggle was now being fought from within and this was the signal we had all been waiting for," adds the advisor.

"Today the establishment of FIDA is another link in the chain of events that will lead to self-rule in the occupied territories. People have taken matters into their own hands and we in Tunis must struggle to keep up with the developments," said the advisor.

Many non-Fatah and non-DFLP Palestinian activists, however, believe that FIDA may turn out to be no more than an extension of the DFLP. "Many of the top members in FIDA are former DFLP people and that worries me," said a member of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP).

Leaders of the Tunis-based DFLP wing have said that they would represent FIDA and its interests in PLO institutions.

"Representatives of the DFLP in the PLO Executive Committee, the Palestine Central Council (PCC) and the Palestine National Council (PNC) will represent the Palestinian Democratic Federation and its political positions and interests from now on," said Salih Ra'fat, the Jordan-based representative of the 'Abd-Rabbuh faction of the DFLP.

Some members of Fatah say that the launching of FIDA may be a "test" to measure the possible success of such a party. "I am sure Abu-'Ammar gave his approval to this party in order to test the ground in the occupied territories," said one Fatah member who is based in Amman.

Some critics even go as far as to claim that the party is directly linked to Fatah. "The representative of the group in Tunis is 'Abd-Rabbuh's group and he is a close and 'dependent' ally of 'Arafat," said one member of Mr. 'Abd-Rabbuh's rival group—the Damascus-based DFLP wing led by Mr. Hawatmah.

One of the many goals that FIDA has in common with Fatah is its desire to offset the gains and support that the Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas has won among the Palestinian masses in the last two years.

"Our programme clearly states that we are the secular alternative to sectarian and religious politics," said a Gaza-based member of the group, 'Amir Abu-'Amir.

Mr. Abu-'Amir, 25, who hails from the slums of Gaza, says that "in Gaza the DFLP was never that strong. It was Fatah, the PFLP and some other groups and then it was Hamas and Islamic Jihad that had following in the street in Gaza."

There are a lot of people in the Gaza Strip who have not committed themselves to any particular political group, says Mr. Abu-'Amir. Gaza, which is one of the most densely-populated areas in the world, is however, "a real test for FIDA, because the Islamists are strong there."

If FIDA picks up a strong following in Gaza—even 20 per cent—then the party will take off everywhere else," Mr. Abu-'Amir predicted.

FIDA programme calls for Israel's withdrawal from the territories it occupied in the 1967 war. East Jerusalem, where the party's headquarters is based should be returned to Arab rule, says FIDA's agenda.

Mr. Khuri says that recruiting activities in labour unions, professional associations, colleges, the Palestinian Women's Federation and prisons have been underway for months.

The ability of the group to finance itself through membership fees and donations as well as its ability to maintain organisational independence from Tunis will decide much of its future success, West Bank observers says.

"FIDA should take care to be truly independent in its programme. If it is seen in the territories as another messenger from Tunis it will fail," said a cautious supporter of the group who is based in Ramallah.

Algeria

FIS Spokesman Kebir on Role of Armed Struggle

PM0203142293 Paris LIBERATION in French 26 Feb 93 p15

[Report on interview with Rabah Kebir, spokesman for Algeria's dissolved Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), by Jose Garcon in Germany; date not stated]

[Text] A year after the imposition of the state of emergency, the Algerian authorities seem to be having the greatest difficulty in controlling what the press calls "the ravages of terrorism." Rabah Kebir, spokesman for the Islamic Salvation Front (the disbanded FIS), whom we met with in Germany, believes that "the Algerian people are in a state of legitimate defense."

With his horn-rimmed spectacles and well-trimmed beard, he is, at the age of 37, one of the young guard of the FIS, those "Islamic technocrats," as the cadres of the Islamic movement who emerged not long before the end of its "legal" period were called. Arrested in early February 1992 and then placed under house arrest, he left Algeria in September and today claims to be the "sole spokesman" for the FIS, also responsible for its political department and foreign relations. "My brothers have authorized me to make the statements the situation requires," he insists, sweeping aside any questions about his authority to speak or to sign communiques in the name of the FIS.

This physics teacher emphasizes that his departure was "decided by the Consultative Council (of the FIS) with the consent" of the main Islamic leaders held in Blida, "notably Abassi Madani." Expressing himself in classical Arabic—he understands French perfectly—he assured us that the FIS leadership is continuing to "meet wherever it likes and wherever it can, without the authorities being able to stop it." Evasive on the number of members of this leadership, he claims that they are "replaced" as the need arises. His own present status illustrates this: "Whenever an official is arrested, another takes his place." "When the mujahidin are operating underground, and when they are submerged among the population like fishes in water, no authorities can find them."

The FIS' two electoral victories, in June 1990 and December 1991, authorize his movement, he says, to "see itself as historically responsible for the people." The authorities are in any case nothing but a "junta" or "putschists" in his eyes. "We predicted after the 11 January coup d'etat (forced resignation of Chadli Bendjedid—LIBERATION editor's note) that the people, robbed of their free choice of December 1991, would have their say, and even get their hands on the originators of the coup." According to him, the climate of violence is therefore directly due to the halting of the electoral process, and above all to repression.

A month ago Ali Belhadj, the FIS number two, imprisoned in Blida, signed—with Rabah Kebir—a document supporting armed groups for the first time. Should this be seen as confirmation that the Islamic movement has finally opted for the armed struggle? "What is the FIS to do, when the people are seeing their children dying, imprisoned, or tortured, and meanwhile Ali Kafi (chairman of the Higher State Council—LIBERATION editor's note) and others are constantly calling for a struggle against those whom they call 'criminals' or 'drug traffickers'? Is this not sufficient reason to say 'stop the massacre,' and to say it vigorously? Is it not our duty to rebel?"

Is the failure of its "legal" strategy leading the FIS to believe that it must destroy the institutions of the state in order to change its nature? "As a political party that has opted for the peaceful path, we have never sought to destroy the state's lawful institutions. It was the authorities themselves who started destroying them: parliament, the executive delegations (who have replaced FIS mayors—LIBERATION editor's note), everything that the people freely chose has been disbanded by this unconstitutional regime." He goes on: "We are going to destroy the unlawful institutions which the dictatorship set up after the coup d'etat, and to build lawful institutions of the Algerian people." According to him, the army is not a target, "because, while itself lawful, it is exploited by unlawful authorities."

Asked about the meaning of the call for a jihad, he confined himself to stating that "the people will defend by every means the choice they made by voting for the FIS," and that it "will have the last word." Refusing to say whether the FIS is financing assassination attempts, he distinguishes between "criminal acts, like the bomb at Algiers airport, carried out by the authorities to discredit the FIS, and the actions of the mujahidin." The failed attempt on the life of [Defense Minister] General Nezzar? "Nezzar is a dictator, the strong man of the regime. Naturally the mujahidin are not going to turn aside from the path leading to him, if they find that path." Constantly employing ambiguity and circumlocution, he denies that this comment amounts to "claiming responsibility." "This attempt," he confines himself to noting, "is a warning to Nezzar and other officials, a warning from the mujahidin."

He also denies that violence is turning the Algerians against an FIS that seems to have given in to pressure from armed groups. "The violence stems from the dictatorship, which has left us no alternative to reciprocal violence. Solutions must be found to put an end to the Algerians' sufferings, whatever the cost. We will not find a friendly political solution," he says, conceding: "If you do not want to be overtaken by events, you have to stay in contact with the people and act according to their wishes."

Rabah Kebir is very vague about relations between the FIS and the armed groups, only observing that it is "natural for the FIS to try to coordinate its defenses, just

as the authorities coordinate their police." "The movement of brother Chebouti (believed to be chief of these groups—LIBERATION editor's note), that of brother Layada, and many others work in collaboration with each other and maybe soon under a unified command." He replies equally vaguely to a question about whether the FIS is calling for the multiplication of underground groups. "We never wanted bloodshed among Algerians. But the dictators decided on battle, and we have no choice but to follow suit."

However, he does not believe that the stepping up of violence buries all possibility of "dialogue": "With or without assassination attempts, dialogue will be possible only when the authorities are forced into it. We saw this during the liberation war: In a situation which had deteriorated greatly, colonialism eventually realized that it had to put an end to the war," he states, while "categorically" denying any contact with the authorities. "We have appealed for dialogue several times in order to open the way to civil peace. The junta would not listen, and scorned our emissaries. Today, much blood has been shed, the cheikhs (FIS leaders—LIBERATION editor's note) are in prison and condemned, and summary executions are multiplying. All this shows the difficulty of dialogue. But if the authorities ask for it, we will study the possibility, and we will adopt the appropriate stance."

Amnesty International Report on Torture Denied

LD0203210793 Algiers ENTV Television Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 2 Mar 93

[Excerpt] [passage omitted] Asked about a report published by Amnesty International on torture in Algeria, official government spokesman Ait Chaalal responded that reports like this are issued and based on testimonies of no known origin. As for the government, the National Human Rights Monitoring Group is the only competent body in that field.

Algeria, which signed an international agreement on human rights, rejects torture in principle, belief, and reality, and fights it. There is nothing in its view that justifies torture. [passage omitted]

Rumors of Plan To Limit Right To Strike Denied

LD0303103593 Algiers APS in English 1007 GMT 3 Mar 93

[Text] Algiers, March 3 (APS)—"It is out of question to question the right to strike or equal representatio ", declared Tuesday [2 March] the spokesman of the government, Messaoud Ait Chaalal during a meeting with the press. Answering a question on rumors, according to which the government is undertaking provisions to limit the right to strike, Ait Chaalal confirmed "the respect the government has for the right to strike" and "categorically" denied these rumors.

The spokesman of the government however pointed out that if "in a particular conjuncture, a strike threatens the strategic interests of the state, it would be normal and legitimate, as this is done in all countries, that the government takes particular decisions".

Concerning the increase of prices, Ait Chaalal announced that "if the situation is not settled withing few days, the government will take decisive measures". The spokesman of the government also pointed out that these increases concerned the products which are "on the free market". "The first necessity products, he added, on which the government committed itself to assure the availability on all the national territory".

Moreover, Ait Chaalal wondered about the sense of the latest statements of the General Union of Algerian Workers (UGTA) which he said he does "not understand", mainly the part related to salaries "which is fully included in the program of the government". The spokesman of the government recalled in this context that the budgetary deficit for 1993 is essentially related to "the will of the government to preserve employment, and even create it and defend the purchasing power of citizens".

In conclusion, the spokesman of the government said that "beyond that", there is what "we have avoided by opposing the International Monetary Fund (IMF) conditions last June and which could have led us to the supression of 500,000 jobs and a three figure inflation that could have hit the most disfavored strata".

'Fundamentalist Militants' Killed; Leader Arrested

NC0303070893 Paris AFP in English 2237 GMT 2 Mar 93

[Text] Algiers, March 2 (AFP)—Nine suspected Islamic fundamentalist militants were killed Tuesday [2 March] by a police patrol in Damous, 70 kilometers (45 miles) west of here, after a high-speed chase, officials said.

The gunmen, riding in a small truck, took off in a hail of gunfire when they sighted the police, the officials said, adding that the police eventually cornered the men, forcing them to abandon their truck, and killed them in an ensuing shootout.

The police recovered arms, grenades and ammunition in the operation, they said.

It was the first clash between security forces and fundamentalists since the start of the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan on February 23.

Security forces have killed 26 militants since February 1, while some 15 security operatives have died in attacks blamed on armed fundamentalist groups, according to an unofficial toll.

On Monday the police said they had arrested a top fundamentalist leader, Ikhlef Cherrati, in an Algiers

suburb. Cherrati, a top deputy of fundamentalist militant leader Abdelkader Chebouti, had been sought for more than a year.

Egypt

U.S. Ability To Move Peace Negotiations Viewed

NC0203191093 Cairo AL-AHRAM in Arabic 28 Feb 93 p 8

[From the "Close-up" column by Salamah Ahmad Salamah: "Partner With Whom?"]

[Text] U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's Middle East tour ended where it began, with the same level of ambiguity about the possibility of achieving progress in the peace talks.

The only clear result is the U.S.-Russian statement, issued in Geneva following formal talks between the U.S. secretary of state and the Russian foreign minister. The statement carried to the concerned parties in the Middle East the good tidings that the two countries have decided to resume the ninth round of peace negotiations in April.

It appears that the Arab parties that held talks with Christopher have found themselves compelled to commit themselves to the start of the peace talks, even to express a desire to expedite their resumption without making it conditional on a solution to the deportee problem. The Arab parties have demanded the implementation of Resolution 799, which calls on Israel to return all the deportees immediately. But the U.S. secretary of state apparently succeeded in convincing the Arabs not to link the resumption of the negotiations to a solution on the deportee problem. A lot of pressure was exerted on the Palestinians to join the caravan. They were given a candid warning that if they did not agree to resume the negotiations, they would start without them.

The clamor in some Arab countries that accompanied Christopher's tour must have pushed the Palestinians to take these contradictory stands between categorical rejection of a return to the negotiations and the warm welcome expressed by the Palestinian delegation's spokesman Hanan 'Ashrawi, who expressed her optimism following the messages Faysal al-Husayni has received from Clinton and Christopher.

Some of this clamor pointed to Israel's willingness to solve the Golan Heights problem and to new developments that hinted of a softening of the intransigent Israeli stand on withdrawal from the Syrian heights. This suggested to the Palestinians that they might really find themselves isolated while the peace train moves away from the Marj al-Zuhur station.

It can be inferred from all this that the deportee problem might be added to the old items on the agenda of the Palestinian-Israeli talks. This is the U.S. solution.

Clinton's America has promised to play the role of a full partner in the coming negotiations; however, the perplexing question is this: A partner with whom? As the new U.S. Administration has supported Israel in the latter's refusal to implement Resolution 799, how, then, will it work to implement Resolutions 242 and 338?

Israeli Obstacles Expected on Path to Peace

NC0203190993 Cairo AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic 26 Feb 93 p6

[Editorial: "The Deportees, the Settlements, and the Role of the Full Partner"]

[Text] U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher has concluded his tour of the region, which focused primarily on the Arab-Israeli conflict and on the resumption of the stalled peace negotiations. The negotiations have stalled on the issue of the Palestinian deportees who are still waiting for just actions that will return them to their homes.

Regardless of the results that Christopher has brought back with him to Washington, it is evident that he sensed an Arab agreement to link the deportees issue to the resumption of the negotiations, particularly on the part of the Palestinian delegation, which openly announced this stance following two meetings with Christopher. Palestinian sources have also reported that Christopher informed Tel Aviv of Egypt's insistence on resolving the deportees issue and on linking it to the resumption of the negotiations.

If, for argument's sake, we assume that there is a solution to the deportees issue on the horizon and that this solution might be announced today, tomorrow, or after one or two months, will this be the last obstacle in the peace talks path? It appears that it will not. On the same day that Christopher concluded his tour, reports from Tel Aviv spoke about the establishment of a new settlement in the Golan. This was done at a time when reports are saying that Israel is leaning toward focusing the peace talks on searching for a settlement with Syria. How can these conflicting reports be squared, especially after Israel has received the $10 billion loan guarantees it demanded from the previous U.S. Administration?

The peace negotiations will stall because of the deportees and settlement issues. This means that the United States has to fulfill the pledge made by Christopher that Washington will play the role of a full partner in the negotiations. This is an Egyptian demand that goes back to the 1970s and which was not correctly addressed under the Nixon, Carter, and Reagan administrations. Will it be achieved under the Clinton administration?

Terrorists Reportedly Drawing 'Last Breath'

NC0303113193 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1039 GMT 3 Mar 93

[Text] Paris, 3 Mar (MENA)—Interior Minister 'Abd-al-Halim Musa has said the terrorists are drawing their

last breath. The minister was answering a question by today's LE FIGARO on whether the bomb detonated by extremists in a cafe in al-Tahrir Square is a sign that the terrorists have entered a new phase.

The interior minister said the number of detainees does not exceed 800, who will be sent for trial soon. This figure, he said, refers to the terrorist rank and file, adding that their leaders are abroad.

Asked who are the Islamic extremists in Egypt today, the minister said they are the legitimate sons of Muslim brothers, who officially renounced terrorism but continue to practice it.

On planned Egyptian Government measures to prevent new attacks, the minister said that everything would be done without bothering tourists. He said the media exaggerate the attacks, which must be put in perspective. He said 3 million tourists visit Egypt annually and four have been killed.

African Bank Gives $263 Million in Loans, Grants

NC2702102893 Cairo AL-AKHBAR in Arabic 25 Feb 93 p 6

[Excerpt] Muhammad al-Shamma' reports: Engineer Mahir Abazah, minister of electricity and energy, has disclosed that the African Development Bank has agreed to finance several important projects to generate electricity, set up 13 transformer stations to provide electricity to rural areas and provincial control centers, and utilize sources of new and renewable energy. The grants and loans the bank has extended total $263 million. [passage omitted]

Steel To Be Exported to PRC, Syria, Saudi Arabia

NC0103145293 Cairo MENA in English 1409 GMT 1 Mar 93

[Text] Cairo, March 1—(MENA)—Egypt will export 70,000 tonnes of steel and its products to China, amounting in value to 21 million dollars. The deal is the biggest of its kind since the establishment of Egypt's Iron and Steel Company in Hulwan in 1956.

Two agreements were signed today with Syria and Saudi Arabia as per which Egypt will export 40,000 tonnes of steel to the two countries, with a value amounting to 12 million dollars, Dr. 'Ali Hilmi, board chairman of Hulwan Company, said.

Libya

Iraqi Envoy Discusses Ties With al-Muntasir

JN0203194293 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1845 GMT 2 Mar 93

[Text] Tripoli, 2 Feb (INA)—[Iraqi] Ambassador Barzan Ibrahim [al-Tikriti] today met with 'Umar al-Muntasir, secretary of the Libyan People's Bureau for Foreign Liaison and International Cooperation.

The officials discussed existing brotherly ties between the two fraternal countries and means to improve them, as well as the latest developments on the Arab and international scenes.

They stressed their joint desire to seriously work to restore Arab solidarity, without which Arab states cannot individually face today's challenges. They emphasized their determination to improve ties between Iraq and Libya.

The meeting was attended by Jum'ah al-Fazzani, secretary of the Libyan General People's Committee for Unity, and the Iraqi ambassador in Tripoli.

Barzan Ibrahim arrived in Tripoli last night from Tunis after conveying an oral message from leader President Saddam Husayn to Tunisian President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali.

Meets With Jallud

JN0303114593 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0843 GMT 3 Mar 93

[Text] Tripoli, 3 Mar (INA)—Staff Major 'Abd-al-Salam Jallud, member of the Libyan Revolution Command Council, received here last night Ambassador Barzan Ibrahim [al-Tikriti], personal envoy of His Excellency President Saddam Husayn.

During the meeting, Barzan Ibrahim relayed an oral message from His Excellency President Saddam Husayn to Libyan leader Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi on fraternal bilateral ties as well as Arab and international developments.

Jallud expressed the solidarity of the Libyan Government and people with Iraq, affirming the importance of restoring Arab solidarity and ending differences in the interest of all parties. The views of both Barzan Ibrahim and Jallud were identical with regard to the issues discussed, whether concerning bilateral ties or Arab and international developments.

The meeting was attended by Jum'ah al-Fazzani, secretary of the General People's Committee for unity, and the Iraqi ambassador in Tripoli.

UK Official, al-Qadhdhafi Held 'Secret' Talks

LD0103191693 London PRESS ASSOCIATION in English 1835 GMT 1 Mar 93

[By Joe Quinn, PRESS ASSOCIATION]

[Text] Tory MP Sir Teddy Taylor today confirmed he had a secret desert meeting with Libyan leader Colonel al-Qadhdhafi over the Lockerbie airliner bombing—but he refused to divulge its outcome.

The meeting, Sir Teddy's second with al-Qadhdhafi, took place in November but has only now been publicly disclosed. Declining to comment further, the MP said: "Obviously I am sorry that the visit has become public and I only hope it will not undermine its success."

The news of the meeting has coincided with speculation that Libya may have found a face-saving formula to hand over to Britain the two men accused of the Lockerbie disaster in which 270 people died when Pan Am flight 103 was blown out of the sky in December 1988. This would involve the men travelling freely to Britain, to be seen leaving the aircraft unhindered and without handcuffs. Once they were on the ground, they could be formally arrested for trial in Scotland, it was suggested. And the date could be in mid-April or before—the United Nations is to discuss Libyan sanctions on April 15, and could then decide to step up existing measures to include Libyan oil exports.

The approach to Sir Teddy Taylor was reported to have come from Libya, which first asked if the two men could stand trial anywhere except Britain or the United States as it feared they would not get a fair trial in those countries.

This was ruled out by the Foreign Office, but then Sir Teddy floated the idea of the two men freely surrendering.

The Foreign Office today responded in a low-key manner, saying: "We have no evidence to support these reports. We will continue to work to ensure compliance with the (UN) resolutions."

One diplomatic source cautioned against raising hopes on the Libyan offer, saying previous reported offers of movement on the Libyan side had come to nothing. "Since this whole affair started the Libyans have said lots of things. What people are looking for is for something to happen," he added.

Morocco

King Pardons Prisoners on Throne Day Anniversary

LD0203230293 Rabat Moroccan Kingdom Radio Network in Arabic 2030 GMT 2 Mar 93

[Excerpt] On the occasion of the day of the throne, the Ministry of Justice issued the following statement:

His majesty the king, may God protect him, gave his obeyed order on the occasion of this year's day of the throne to cancel the remainder of the terms of jail or prison for the benefit of 155 prisoners, to reduce the terms of jail or prison for the benefit of 304 prisoners, to cancel the term of jail while keeping the fines for 31 people, to cancel the term of detention for the benefit of 21 people, to cancel the term of jail as well as the fines for the benefit of eight people, and to commute life imprisonment to a fixed term of imprisonment for the benefit of three prisoners. [passage omitted]

Student Clashes at Fes University Reported

LD0203153493 Rabat MAP in English 1313 GMT 2 Mar 93

[Text] Rabat, Mar. 02 (MAP)—"Serious incidents" took place lately at the Fes University between Islamist and leftist students, Moroccan "AL BAYANE " daily Tuesday wrote.

The incidents claimed the life of student El Jiid Benaissa who was aggressed to death by Islamist students, the daily of the Party for Progress and Socialism "PPS/ Opposition" said.

Human Rights Council Wants Links With Amnesty International

LD0203135993 Rabat MAP in English 1237 GMT 2 Mar 93

[Text] Rabat, Mar. 2 (MAP)—Secretary General of the Human Rights Consultative Council Mohamed Mikou renewed the council's readiness to re-establish contacts with Amnesty International [A.I.] the soonest possible.

Mikou said at a meeting with the media here Monday that the council decided to open with Amnesty International "a constructive, earnest and responsible dialogue" following the contacts between the two sides during the African preparatory congress of the international conference on human rights held in Tunis.

He recalled that dialogue with A.I. was severed when the council realized that the organization was using a double standard, criticizing the human rights situation in Morocco while keeping silent over these rights violations in the Tindouf camps.

Mikou then underlined the council's determination to be up to the new Moroccan amended constitution wherein Morocco pledges to respect human rights as they are internationally recognized and surveyed the positive achievements completed by the council. He mentioned in this regard the progress made in matters of custody detention and detention conditions as well as the royal free pardon measures decided at the council's proposal.

Mikou also recalled that the council had decided during its 6th session (Feb. 12) to set up a new working group dealing with economic, social and cultural rights.

Other members of the council took the floor to underline the independent character of the council saying the fact that some ministers are member of the council does not influence the latter which is independent vis-a-vis the legislative, executive and judiciary powers.

Western Sahara

Abdelaziz: Return to War Would Be Last Resort

PM0203140193 Madrid YA in Spanish 20 Feb 93 p 6

[Interview with Mohamed Abdelaziz, Saharan Democratic Arab Republic president and Popular Front for the Liberation of Saquia El Hamra and Rio de Oro secretary general, by Isabel Piquer in Madrid; date not given]

[Excerpt] [passage omitted] [Piquer] At the press conference which you held on the second day of your visit [to Madrid], you stated that if the UN peace plan were not implemented, you would be prepared to take up arms again. Do you not believe that these statements could hamper the negotiations on this issue which are being resumed in the Security Council?

[Abdelaziz] As long as there is a slight hope of the implementation of this peace plan, we will continue to trust and cooperate with the United Nations. A return to war would be the last solution which we would consider, if the peace plan fails owing to Morocco's stance. This government wishes to amend the original plan, so that it would bear no resemblance to what was agreed, because it is convinced—and rightly so—that if the Saharans were to decide freely, their opting for independence would be inevitable.

[Piquer] Butrus-Ghali proposed a date for holding the referendum, at the beginning of this year. Does the Polisario [Popular Front for the Liberation of Saquia El Hamra and Rio de Oro] have a deadline for going to war?

[Abdelaziz] We have set ourselves no date. As long as we have hopes that the peace plan will be implemented on the basis of the 1974 Spanish census, and as long as the UN effort runs in that direction, we will observe the cease-fire.

[Piquer] [Spanish Foreign] Minister Solana has described the possibility of a return to war, which you announced, as "very bad news..."

[Abdelaziz] We also believe that a return to war would be very bad news. In order to prevent this from becoming a reality, the United Nations should do everything possible to force Morocco to change its conduct; its failure would be a blow and a disgrace for all peoples.

[Piquer] Do you not believe that Spain's stance on this issue has been rather ambiguous?

[Abdelaziz] We are not demanding that Spanish interests in Morocco be disrupted; we want only a balance in relations and interests between Morocco and the Saharan people, since the international community recognizes the two sides in the conflict. Spain's supporting the idea of a referendum in Western Sahara is not incompatible with its interests.

[Piquer] What is the mood in the camps at present?

[Abdelaziz] Living conditions are very difficult—the same as for 17 years; however, the population have unshakable faith in the justice of their cause and are prepared for greater sacrifices in order to secure their rights. Peace is not as close as we believed last year, following the cease-fire.

[Piquer] Are you not afraid that time is working in favor of Morocco, which is practicing a strong policy of integration and no longer has to defend itself against the Polisario's attacks?

[Abdelaziz] We do not believe that time is working in Morocco's favor. The more time passes, the greater the knowledge the public will have of this situation. When Morocco invaded us in 1975, it announced that it would take it just a week to settle matters. That was 17 years ago, and they still have not been able to crush us.

[Piquer] One of your main allies in the region is Algeria. Are you worried by the developments which the country is now experiencing? Could this call this support into question?

[Abdelaziz] We are not worried about the support of Algeria, which has maintained the same stance for 20 years. There is no doubt that an unstable situation adversely affects the region; nevertheless, we observe a recovery on the part of Algeria, where the state's authority has returned.

Bahrain

Amir Receives Saudi Eastern Province Governor

LD0203145093 Riyadh SPA in English 1237 GMT 2 Mar 93

[Text] Manama, March 2, SPA—Amir of Bahrain Shaykh 'Isa Bin-Salman Al Khalifah received in Manama last night Prince Muhammad Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, governor of the Eastern Province. Prince Muhammad conveyed to Shaykh 'Isa the greetings of Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz and his congratulations to him on the occasion of the holy month of Ramadan. Shaykh 'Isa and Prince Muhamad discussed the outstanding fraternal relations between the Kingdom and Bahrain.

Shaykh 'Isa praised the pioneering role of the Kingdom under the leadership of King Fahd in service of the causes of the GCC [Gulf Cooperation Council] and the Arab and Islamic nations as well as its role in boosting global peace and security. The meeting was attended by Bahraini Heir Apparent Shaykh Hamad Bin-'Isa Al Khalifah and Interior Minister Shaykh Muhammad Bin-Mubarak Al Khalifah.

Kuwait

Parliamentary Pressure Causes General Staff Change

PM0203120993 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 28 Feb 93 p4

[Hamad al-Jasir report: "Kuwait: Chief of Staff's Resignation Accepted; Major General 'Ali al-Mu'min Tipped to Succeed Him"]

[Text] Kuwait—Kuwaiti sources yesterday expected the amir, Shaykh Jabir al-Ahmad al-Sabah, to issue a decree appointing Major General 'Ali al-Mu'min as chief of the General Staff of the Kuwaiti Armed Forces following the acceptance of Chief of Staff Major General Jabir Khalid al-Sabah's resignation by Defense Minister 'Ali al-Sabah.

According to the same sources, Maj. Gen. Jabir was appointed adviser at the heir apparent's court after the acceptance of his resignation. The sources also say that Air Brigadier General Fahd al-Amir, operations commander at armed forces headquarters, will be promoted to major general and will be appointed deputy to new Chief of Staff Maj. Gen. al-Mu'min, who himself was previously deputy to Maj. Gen. Jabir al-Sabah.

Kuwaiti National Assembly sources have told AL-HAYAH that the acceptance of the chief of staff's resignation reflected a desire by Defense Minister Shaykh 'Ali al-Sabah and the government in general to respond to the National Assembly's calls for changes in the army command.

In the course of the consultations and discussions in parliamentary committees, and especially the financial and defense committees, Assembly deputies had called for fundamental changes in the armed forces command and requested the dismissal of those linked to the gross military failure in the face of the Iraqi invasion in August 1990.

The parliamentary sources believe that the resignation of Maj. Gen. Jabir al-Sabah defuses an impending crisis between the National Assembly and the Defense Ministry. The deputies were seeking interrogation of the various military commanders to determine the role they played at the time of the Iraqi invasion. The financial and economic committees still make army reforms a precondition for acceptance of the budget for the re-equipment of the army, for which 3.5 billion dinars ($11.8 billion) have been allocated.

Saudi Arabia

King Fahd Chairs Council of Ministers Meeting

LD0203154393 Riyadh SPA in English 1230 GMT 2 Mar 93

[Text] Riyadh, March 2, SPA—The Saudi Council of Ministers, which held its regular weekly meeting under the chairmanship of custodian of the two holy mosques King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, reviewed summary reports on the most significant issues of the hour at Arab and Islamic levels as well as the course of events in the Arab region in the light of current efforts made so far to bring about peace.

After the meeting, Information Minister 'Ali al-Sha'ir said King Fahd briefed the council on some political developments and underlined the continuous efforts made by the kingdom at Arab and international levels to reach a just and lasting peace in the Middle East according to the U.N. Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 which form the base for an ideal solution which should be implemented as a step in the right direction.

Sha'ir said the council expressed its grave concern and deep sorrow over the continued random shelling of Kabul city despite repeated calls for a ceasefire and dialogue for settling differences for the interest of the Muslim Afghan people and for preserving its gains for which the Afghan people had made many sacrifices.

It took note of the course of events in Somalia and Bosnia-Hercegovina and reviewed current Islamic and international efforts being made to reach an end to these problems, he added.

The monarch, then discussed with the council some local issues on its agenda, foremost among them was preparations for haj this year, and listened to briefings made by the concerned ministers.

King Fahd has urged all officials in charge of haj services to double their efforts to complete the general plan for this year's haj on the first of Shawal [April] month.

The council looked into other local issues on its agenda and took appropriate decisions on them, the information minister said.

United Arab Emirates

U.S. Accused of Encouraging Arab-Israeli War

NC0203124893 Paris AFP in English 1138 GMT 2 Mar 93

[Text] Abu Dhabi, March 2 (AFP)—A Gulf newspaper, in a rare attack on Washington, Tuesday [2 March] accused Israel of preparing for a fresh war against the Arabs with U.S. support and urged Arab countries to confront the threat.

The Dubayy-based AL-BAYAN daily was commenting on Israel's testfire Sunday of the anti-rocket missile, Hetz or Arrow, which was partly funded by the United States under the U.S. "Star Wars" Strategic Defence Initiative.

"Although the test was not completely successful, the report in itself has more than one implication. The most important one is that while Arabs do not stop talking about peace, Israel is preparing for war," AL-BAYAN said.

"This preparation for war, with U.S. help and encouragement, is linked to Israel's intransigent position in the peace negotiations and its creation of obstacles that make it impossible to reach a settlement."

The front page editorial was one of the bitterest attacks on Washington by a Gulf newspaper since the U.S. led an international coalition in ousting Iraqi invasion troops from Kuwait in early 1991.

AL-BAYAN said Arab countries "should face Israel's preparation for war with a similar preparation, if not bigger" to "move from a position of full capitulation to a position of just peace."

The U.S., Israel's main arms supplier, and Russia are co-sponsoring Arab-Israeli peace talks which have stalled since Israel's expulsion to Lebanon in December of 415 Palestinians.

President Willing To Adopt Open Stand on Israel

JN0203184993 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1700 GMT 2 Mar 93

[Text] Iraqi President Saddam Husayn hinted in a U.S. television interview that he would adopt a more open stand toward Israel if an acceptable solution to the Palestinian problem was found. The interview was not broadcast by the U.S. television network but by the second channel of Italian television. Asked about his opinion of the state of Israel, Saddam said the Arabs oppose all sorts of racial and religious discrimination.

Government Rejects OPEC Production Agreement

JN0203145493 Baghdad AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic 27 Feb 93 pp 1, 2

[By Oil Editor Nahid al-Sharqawi]

[Excerpt] Baghdad—Iraq has deemed itself no party to the February 1993 agreement concluded by OPEC's Market Monitoring Committee during its 13-16 February meeting in Vienna, which set production quotas for OPEC member states.

Iraq's representative at the conference stressed that Iraq only recognizes the Geneva agreement of July 1990, which was concluded under normal circumstances free of any outside pressures.

The representative added that Iraq adheres to this agreement and considers it the only available basis for organizing and linking OPEC production and prices. [passage omitted]

Mubarak Called 'Obedient Servant' of 'Zionists'

JN0203183393 Baghdad Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1600 GMT 2 Mar 93

[Unattributed talk]

[Text] Brothers: While Shim'on Peres, the enemy foreign minister, was stating that there will be no pledges to not deport any more Palestinians following the latest deportation of some 400 citizens from our people more than two months ago, Usamah al-Baz, adviser to Egyptian President Husni Mubarak, was concluding his talks with the Zionists to discuss the resumption of settlement talks, which U.S. Secretary of State Christopher suggested resume in mid-April.

Usamah al-Baz, who, according to news reports, went to boost the settlement process, in fact went to beg anew to the Zionists, as if the Arabs are the ones to blame and as if the Arabs are the guilty party who must apologize to the Zionists for not accepting the deportation decision and for linking, even in an indecisive and unserious manner, the negotiators' return to the negotiating table and the return of our deportees.

This, however, did not stop the obedient servant Husni Mubarak from attempting to offer additional services. He expressed a desire to visit Tel Aviv and settle the matter. Here we ask: How would Mubarak settle the matter with the Zionists? Would he not hold their hand and support their decisions? Does Husni not think that he will receive a new slap from the Zionists for trying to stand against them? This is the nature of the game the Zionists play with their servants and lackeys. This game exposes them more than it serves their evil aggressive goals.

Paper Says Saudi Arabia Seeking Trade With Israel

JN0203143493 Baghdad INA in English 1330 GMT 2 Feb 93

[Text] Baghdad, Mar 2, INA—An Iraqi paper shed light on part of plots being hatched by the Saudi regime against destiny issues of the Arab nation and its call for opening trade cooperation with Israel.

AL-QADISIYAH daily, organ of the Defence Ministry, said in its article for today that the Saudi regime had earlier taken the initiative for opening scopes of cooperation between the Arab countries and Israel, and it had conducted several contacts culminated with economic accords aimed at breaking the Arab boycott.

The paper added that these accords had paved the way for Israel's invasion of the Arab markets with a view to reducing grave effects of the inflation from which the Israeli economy is suffering, and finding best means for besieging the Arab masses seeking for their right to decent life away from blackmail and exploitation.

The paper made it clear that the Arab boycott despite it had not been tightened accurately but it harmed the Israeli economy and raised the rate of inflation, confirming that the Saudi openess will enable Israel overcoming its economic problems and rehabilitate it to absorb the Jewish immigration at the expense of the Palestinian people.

The paper said that the Saudi move for saving Israel is certainly interpreting part of secrets of its feverish conspiracy against the revolutionary Arab regimes that raised slogans of liberation, independence and decent life.

This affair has instigated the Saudi regime to mobilize all world armies and their destructive capabilities for launching fierce barbaric aggression against Iraq because it raised the banner of independence and emancipation, the paper concluded.

Paper Says Attack on Iraq Planned Before 1990

JN0203142793 Baghdad INA in English 1320 GMT 2 Feb 93

[Text] Baghdad, Mar. 2, INA—THE BAGHDAD OBSERVER newspaper of today said that the U.S. President George Bush used to turn down Iraqi peace proposals at TV interviews and press conference even before receiving official documents on such bids through

proper channels. Bush went to the extent of turning down alleged Iraqi proposals which Iraq actually had not even made. It seemed to be a war fever for Bush at the time, a fever that even blocked his common sense as the leader of the world's most powerful nation.

The documents of President Saddam Husayn meetings with various dignitaries that followed the events of 2nd August show that the aggressive plan against Iraq was laid down well before 1990, and that attacking Baghdad was a goal in itself and not a means to achieve a goal. Right from the day the ceasefire in the Iraq-Iran war was declared, the U.S. and its allies embarked on the anti-Iraq drive. The drive gained momentum when it was clear that after eight years of war against Iranian invaders, the Iraqis came out strong and high-moraled. To "tame" this new power as soon as possible was a U.S. main objective.

The paper further said that preparations for the aggression went ahead as if war was inevitable, and neither Washington nor any allied capital bothered to come forward with a single peace initiative to avoid the war. Considering Iraqis, and other peace initiatives, such a stance by the U.S. and its allies meant only one thing, willy nilly, the war against Iraq must be launched.

Capitalising on distortion and fabrication may pay off for some time, but not forever, because the day must come when the truth would be known. Hence, the present documents show the naked truth. The U.S. would have attacked Iraq anyway, even if it were Kuwaitis who aggressed upon Iraq.

'Stray Groups' Said Hampering Electricity in North

JN0203171193 Baghdad Republic of Iraq Radio Network in Arabic 1530 GMT 2 Mar 93

[Text] An official source at the Ministry of Industry and Minerals has said that citizens in the autonomous region are suffering from deteriorating electrical service and frequent power outages, particularly in Dahuk Governorate, as a result of what the stray groups are doing. These groups are stealing components from the electricity grids and connecting illegally into these networks.

In a statement to an IRAQI NEWS AGENCY correspondent, the source said these actions have led to an unprecedented overload of the electricity grid. Demand for electricity in Dahuk Governorate has reached 95 megawatts.

The source said this overload is above and beyond the capacity of the power network, and has led to cuts in electrical service, a deterioration in the overall conditions of the power grid, and damage to huge parts of that network. It will be difficult to compensate for the damage because of circumstances resulting from the unjust siege imposed on Iraq.

He pointed out that the Security Council's Sanctions Committee has so far not approved any request related to electricity, including simple spare parts needed for repairs, due to objections voiced by permanent Council members who were party to the 30-state aggression.

Ending his statement, the source urged citizens in the autonomous region to watch out for these stray groups and prevent their stealing of network components and making illegal wire taps into the grid with the aim of [word indistinct] electrical cuts, and to ensure the continuation of electrical service and its maintenance through the use of local materials available to electricity authorities.

Saddam Meets With al-Basrah Tribal Chiefs

JN0303090293 Baghdad Republic of Iraq Radio Network in Arabic 2100 GMT 2 Mar 93

[Text] Tribal chieftains in the al-Basrah Governorate have vowed allegiance to great Iraq, to leader President Saddam Husayn, may God protect him, and to the principles of the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party in front of the leader president. They vowed before God, the people, and the leader to remain loyal to the national soil to safeguard its sovereignty, and willing to make sacrifices in blood and with all that is dear to protect the chaste territory of Iraq. They also affirmed their determination to crush all tyrannical aggressors and mean agents who might entertain the notion of defiling Iraqi territory or violating its security or stability.

Amid popular songs, poems, and speeches, and in the midst of banners and rifles, the leader president delivered a valuable instructive speech.

Leader President Saddam Husayn, may God protect him, has ordered the allocation of 10 million dinars to promote the municipal and cultural services being rendered to citizens in the governorate and introduce new services there. For the same purpose, the leader president ordered the allocation of 10 million dinars for the Saddamiyat al-Qurnah District, 2 million dinars for every other district in the governorate, and 1.5 million dinars for each subdistrict in the governorate. May God protect the leader president and grant him a long life, since he has been acting for the public good of his loyal people.

The meeting was attended by Hatim Hamdan al-'Azzawi, chief of the Presidential Office.

Defense Minister Visits Air Defense Unit, Dhi Qar

JN0203191793 Baghdad Republic of Iraq Radio Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 2 Mar 93

[Text] Fighter Staff General 'Ali Hasan al-Majid, Revolution Command Council member and defense minister, today visited the 3d Air Defense Sector and met with the sector's commander and staff officers.

The fighter defense minister listened to a detailed report from the sector's commander, who holds the rank of brigadier general, and the staff officers on the fighters' high morale and operational and performance preparedness to defend the skies of great Iraq.

Fighter Staff Gen. 'Ali Hasan al-Majid addressed the attendees, saying: I advise you, valiant men, to exercise patience because it is the weapon of faithful men, the cream of men in our current march of jihad. I also advise you to be vigilant at all times. These two traits can only be achieved when fighters pool their sincere and creative efforts on all levels to foil the plans of our evil enemies, who always wish to murder the valiant Iraqis.

In a related development, fighter Staff General 'Ali Hasan al-Majid, Revolution Command Council member and defense minister, today visited Dhi Qar Governorate and met Governor Tahir Jalil Habbush, who briefed him on the citizens readiness and cooperation with the governorate's agencies and departments to strengthen security and stability in the governorate and deny the agents and traitors, the lackeys of the foreigner, any opportunity to harm great Iraq.

RCC Pardons Army Deserters From Khanaqin Area

JN2702151793 Baghdad BABIL in Arabic 23 Feb 93 p 1

[From the "Scoop" section]

[Text] BABIL has learned that the Revolution Command Council [RCC] has decided to issue a general amnesty covering Army deserters from the Khanaqin District. Legal measures against them will be finally suspended concerning all crimes, except murder and rape.

It has also been decided that military personnel—officers, other ranks, and volunteers—covered by the above amnesty shall be exempted from military service.

The RCC has called on those covered by the amnesty to hand themselves over to party or administrative organizations within two months of the date of the amnesty.

The new decree shall be considered effective 10 February, and shall cover crimes committed before this date.

Italian Companies To Supply Food, Medicine

JN2702185293 Baghdad AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic 24 Feb 93 p 1

[By Ghazi al-'Ayyash]

[Excerpt] The Italian Government has authorized Italian companies to enter into contracts with Iraq to supply it with foodstuffs, including white and dark meat, baby milk, medicine, and other materials linked with Iraq's living and health conditions.

The first offer the Iraqi Trade Ministry received came from a consortium of Italian companies. The offer indicated that these companies are ready to immediately supply Iraq with foodstuffs, all kinds of meat, baby milk, and medical materials at an estimated cost of $600 million dollars, to be paid to these companies in Iraqi oil once the blockade on Iraq if lifted.

A delegation representing the said Italian companies arrived in Baghdad yesterday and will start talks with the Trade Ministry and the Oil Ministry over the next two days. [passage omitted]

Civil Defense Says 464,599 Bombs Defused Through Feb

JN0303151893 Baghdad INA in English 1320 GMT 3 Mar 93

[Text] Baghdad, 3 Mar (INA)—The director of Civil Defence said that a total of 464,599 unexploded bombs, mines and rockets dropped by the American, British and French warplanes during the aggression on Iraq were defused until February 1993.

In a message addressed to the International Organization for Civilian Protection, the director of Civil Defence appealed to the organization to play its humanitarian and constitutional role in moving on all levels for lifting the oppressive embargo imposed on the Iraqi people.

The message was sent on the occasion of the International Civil Defence Day.

Hamas Says Meetings Held Despite U.S. Denials

TA0303062993 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0505 GMT 3 Mar 93

[Discussion in the studio between Arab affairs correspondent Arye Gus and Karmit Gay—live]

[Text] [Gay] Arye, we were informed this morning about contacts between the United States and Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] people—the State Department spokesman in fact claims these contacts have been terminated. Already last week, however, we reported that contacts were being held between the United States and Hamas people, so what is new here?

[Gus] True, we already reported about these contacts, which were divulged by Muhammad Nazzal, Hamas representative in Jordan. His remarks caused a storm, at least in the internal Palestinian camp, because the PLO was extremely annoyed after being informed about these contacts. There is a contradiction between the comments of Hamas representative in Jordan and the way in which the State Department spokesman depicted these contacts. Let us review this affair more closely: The Americans said they were merely evincing an academic interest in the Islamic world. Muhammad Nazzal claims, however, that during the two meetings Hamas sought to explain the nature of the movement in an effort to prevent the inclusion of Hamas in the list of terror organizations. A third meeting was canceled after the Hamas people asked to meet Roger Harrison, the U.S. ambassador in Amman.

The State Department spokesman claims that no political dialogue was held, but according to Nazzal such a dialogue was indeed held. The Americans claim that they did not hold meetings with Hamas' official echelons, but according to Muhammad Nazzal—who is, to repeat, Hamas' representative in Jordan—the meetings were attended both by himself and by Ibrahim Ghawshah, Hamas' official spokesman. We should note that Nazzal and Ghawshah are two of the four most senior Hamas members, and that they attended the Hamas-PLO meetings both in Tunis and in Khartoum. According to Hamas people, the meetings with the Americans were held at their own request.

The Americans in fact played into Hamas' hands, because after these meetings Hamas officials emphasized the fact that while the United States is refusing to resume the dialogue with the PLO—this is what Warren Christopher stated during his meeting with the Palestinian delegation in Jerusalem—the Americans are in fact conducting a dialogue with Hamas. In this way Hamas intended to score points in the internal struggle within the Palestinian camp.

Deputy Defense Minister Urges Public To Remain Calm

TA0303121193 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1100 GMT 3 Mar 93

[Text] Deputy Defense Minister Mordekhay Gur urged the public and the Knesset members [MK's] not to panic as a result of the recent terror wave. In the framework of a Knesset plenum debate on the recent attacks, Mr. Gur said that progress in the peace process will not prevent Israel from striking at terrorism both in the Gaza Strip and in Lebanon.

Meretz MK Ran Kohen said that the only solution to the problem of Hizballah in the north is to return the Golan Heights to the Syrians and in exchange to demand absolute calm in the north. This is reported by our correspondent Hayim Hecht.

Security in Gaza Strip Tightened Following Attacks

TA0303114893 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1105 GMT 3 Mar 93

[Report by correspondent in the territories Moti Amir]

[Text] The security forces are conducting intensive searches among the inhabitants of Rafah in order to apprehend those responsible for the cruel murder of Yehoshu'a Weissbrod. Rafah residents said that IDF [Israel Defense Forces] soldiers detained approximately 100 residents who are suspected of having pelted Weissbrod. Among them are some youngsters who attacked him from close range with large stones. The IDF has still not confirmed these reports.

The IDF has confirmed, however, that the terrorist who shot Weissbrod is a member of the Fatah Hawks terror squad which operates in this area. A military source emphasized the curfew in Rafah will be enforced for as long as it takes to apprehend Weissbrod's murderers. The source maintains this was an extremely grave attack perpetrated by dozens of residents, with none of the Ibnah refugee camp inhabitants attempting to save the innocent Israeli citizen who lost his way—not even one righteous person was found in this Sedom. The source added that the security forces will therefore severely punish the inhabitants of this area in order to deter them from perpetrating similar actions in future.

This morning several senior officers came to the Gaza Strip, among them Major General Dani Rothschild, coordinator of activities in the territories. Security sources noted that Civil Administration officials are currently reviewing the lists of Arabs who are eligible to work in Israel, comparing them with the lists of those who are actually employed by Israeli employers and with the lists of those possessing magnetic exit permits. The sources emphasize that immediately after the closure imposed on the Gaza Strip is lifted, the inspection procedures in the Gaza Strip checkpoints will be intensified. The soldiers will be required to maintain top alert in order to prevent the entrance of terrorists to Israel.

Passenger of Israeli Car Killed in Gaza Strip

TA0203131593 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1302 GMT 2 Mar 93

[Text] A report just in. A murder was perpetrated about 30 minutes ago in the Rafah area in the southern Gaza Strip. When a vehicle carrying Israeli license plates arrived at the Rafah refugee camp it was stoned by Arab inhabitants. One of the passengers was killed in the incident. A curfew was clamped on the site. Large Army and Border Police forces rushed to the site and are carrying out searches. That is the initial information.

Rafah Under Curfew

TA0203173393 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1700 GMT 2 Mar 93

[Text] Brigadier General Yom-Tov Sami', commander of the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] troops in the Gaza Strip, said that the Israeli who was murdered in Rafah this afternoon had worked for the Petrolgaz Company and came for a business meeting at the gas station in the city, near the Egyptian border. Before getting there, he was briefed by a soldier in the settlement of Rafiah Yam, who warned him not to drive there on his own. The man went alone, nevertheless, apparently lost his way, and arrived at an ambush of stone throwers.

Attempting to escape, the motorist crashed into a fence and was injured. An Arab armed with a Kalashnikov submachine gun approached him and shot him four times at a very close range. One of the bullets hit the Israeli in the head. Our correspondent Gil Litman updated us on the remarks by Yom-Tov Sami'.

Rafah is still under curfew and the IDF continues searches.

Yeshiva Guard Stabbed in Jerusalem 3 Mar

TA0303122093 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1200 GMT 3 Mar 93

[Text] A guard in the 'Ateret Kohanim Yeshiva in the Old City of Jerusalem was stabbed in the chest while guarding a group walking in Hagay Street in the Muslim Quarter. The assailant, a woman from Ramallah, was apprehended by another guard. The guard, who suffered moderate injuries, is currently being evacuated to the Hadassah-'En Kerem Hospital.

Israeli Kills Arab Stone Thrower Near Jerusalem

TA0203171893 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1700 GMT 2 Mar 93

[Text] This evening on the road leading to Ma'ale Adumim, east of Jerusalem, an Arab resident of Ra's al-'Amud was killed by shots fired by an Israeli motorist whose car had been pelted with rocks. Our correspondent Yaron Enosh reports that local residents told him that after his car was stoned, the Israeli driver stopped his car, got out of it, and fired several shots, hitting a resident of Ra's al-'Amud. The driver fled the site and police are searching for him.

Settlers' Advice To Fire on Stone Throwers Rejected

TA0303094293 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 3 Mar 93 p A1

[Report by Nadav Shragay and Eytan Rabin]

[Excerpt] The Council of Jewish Settlements in Judaea, Samaria, and the Gaza Strip last night issued a statement calling on settlers in the territories to open fire each time there is a stone-throwing incident. Senior IDF [Israel Defense Forces] officers in the Central Command expressed anger at the settlers' announcement.

This is the first such announcement by settlers' leaders. In the past, similar announcements were issued only on behalf of bodies such as Kakh [extreme rightwing Israeli movement] or its various offshoots.

Council spokesman Aharon Domb explained that the body is calling on inhabitants pelted with stones to fire in the air in order to deter and to shoot to hit if there is a danger to life. The Emunim settlers' movement last night issued a similar announcement. Central Command sources noted last night that they had not received any notice of a unilateral change in the rules of engagement by the council.

The IDF has made it clear that it will not permit settlers to take the law into their own hands. "Charges will be brought against anyone who opens fire contrary to orders. There are clear instructions that fire can be opened only when life is endangered. Those are the standing orders for soldiers and civilians alike. With due respect to the council, there will be no Lebanonization here. The IDF is the sovereign power in the area and there will be no situation in which each settler can decide to open fire when he so desires," a source in the Central Command said. [passage omitted]

Minister Der'i, Likud's Levi on Gaza Withdrawal

TA0203125093 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1100 GMT 2 Mar 93

[Excerpts] Interior Minister Arye Der'i has said that the government should discuss a withdrawal from the Gaza Strip in order to examine what Israel could get in return for such a move.

[Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew at 1100 GMT on 2 March adds that "Interior Minister Der'i said that the closure on the Gaza Strip is merely a temporary solution. Der'i said he would oppose a unilateral withdrawal from the Gaza Strip" so that Israel would not have to cope with "problems such as hunger, suicides, or murders, with the responsibility being laid on us."] [passage omitted]

Likud Knesset Member David Levi said that all the talk of unilateral withdrawal from the Gaza Strip is a sign of

the government's despair and loss of control and a signal to the terrorist organizations that Israel is nearing its breaking point. David Levi expressed the belief that if Israel pulled out of the Gaza Strip, the area would turn into another Lebanon.

Rabin Said To Hold Key to Breakthrough With Syria

TA0203124293 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 2 Mar 93 p B1

[Commentary by Yo'el Marcus: "A Question of Leadership"]

[Text] If there is any truth to the whispers, hints, and suggestions that Hafiz al-Asad is psychologically and practically willing to make peace with Israel, a dramatic breakthrough should definitely be expected soon. Such a breakthrough, however, depends more on Yitzhaq Rabin than on al-Asad. Why? Because it is Rabin who must make up his mind whether he is willing and able to give up the Golan Heights in exchange for the removal of Syria from the circle of war and the opening of a Syrian embassy in Tel Aviv.

The difference between al-Asad and Rabin is that the Syrian president is pursuing a long-term strategy. The peace signals toward Israel began after al-Asad decided to pursue a pro-American orientation. This was manifestly evident when he joined the anti-Iraq coalition. Who would have dreamed a few years ago that the Syrian Army would fight alongside the U.S. Army against an Arab country? When al-Asad tells the Spanish foreign minister that a breakthrough could come as early as April this year, and when Warren Christopher returns from Damascus radiating pleasure, it is obvious that one must take seriously the change in the Syrian leader's attitude vis-a-vis Israel.

In contrast, Rabin is not following a strategy but a gut feeling. The fact that Professor Itamar Rabinovich is both his neighbor and friend and also happens to be an expert on Syrian affairs amply explains Rabin's reversal from his promise of autonomy within six to nine months to a pro-Syrian orientation. The difference between autonomy for the Palestinians and an arrangement with Syria, however, is that with the former we are seeking an interim arrangement and deferring the final arrangement to a later stage, whereas with the Syrians both sides must determine the framework of the final arrangement from the outset. Rabin will be called upon to make decisions and to disclose whether the Egyptian formula—all the land in exchange for full peace—will also apply to an arrangement with Syria. After all, there is no fooling around with Syria: Either we know from the start what we are getting in to and take big and quick action, or else nothing will budge.

Rabin has so far avoided giving an answer, arguing that al-Asad has not yet said what kind of peace he is prepared to commit himself to: a full peace or commercial and tourist relations like we have with Egypt. However, the game of "you show me yours before I show you mine" cannot and had better not go on forever. The time factor is critical from the prime minister's point of view because of the following combination of circumstances in his favor:

—The main opposition party, the Likud, is busy waging an internal war and has no leader. By the time it gets its act together, Rabin can secure a majority in the Knesset in favor of a dramatic territorial concession on the Golan.

—His current government is purely a government of peace, without Tzomet and the National Religious Party but with SHAS [Torah Observing Sephardim], whose future in the government is very uncertain and unclear in view of the fact that Arye Der'i might be brought to trial. Speedy action must be taken while the government remains in its current constellation.

—As it transpires from Deputy Chief of Staff Amnon Shahaq's remarks, the Army is prepared to provide security alternatives in the event of a Golan withdrawal in the context of peace. True, the Army must do what the political level orders it to do, but doing it by virtue of an order or out of conviction—which is possible—makes a difference. Such backing is not forever and could change if the security situation along the northern border deteriorates.

—The Israeli public has been indicating support for peace with Syria—a country with which going to war, as everybody knows, would be no picnic—along the lines of the Egyptian model. This credit is not unlimited, as Rabin himself has said.

—Relations with the new U.S. Administration began on the right foot and with a great deal of goodwill on its part to help the process. Not only could the United States be turned into an active partner in securing an arrangement but, what is more important, into a guarantor of our security, both de jure and de facto, during the execution of the arrangement. This sweet opening could sour soon enough if it turns out that we are not playing ball in the big game of land for peace.

—Although he won the elections by the skin of his teeth, Rabin is still in absolute control of his party and cabinet and enjoys reasonable public trust—two assets that will vanish if he fails to appear determined to make big concessions, as Menahem Begin did in order to attain peace with Egypt.

As far as Rabin is concerned, a crack has opened up through which he may lead us to peace with the strongest and toughest of our enemies. Time, however, is a critical factor in this fleeting crack. From now on, it is only a question of leadership.

Intelligence Chief on Iran's Nuclear Capability

TA2802183793 Jerusalem Israel Television Network in Arabic 1730 GMT 28 Feb 93

[Interview with Major General Uri Sagi, head of the Army's Intelligence Branch, by Dani Levi; date and place not given—recorded in Hebrew with Arabic subtitles]

[Text] [Sagi] Iran, as part of its aspirations to achieve strategic capability in the Persian Gulf in particular and in the Middle East in general, is attempting to develop a strategic arm in the form of nuclear weapons. Such a process takes a very long time, and Iran, just like other states, will need the cooperation of other countries to realize its goal. Iran has decided that it wants to develop such weapons to achieve strategic parity with regard to all regional developments that affect it. This process takes time and requires a very extensive infrastructure as well as the cooperation of numerous elements, as I have pointed out before.

[Levi] When do you think that this could reach the stage of practical implementation?

[Sagi] If the process continues without interruption, or in other words, if no external element intervenes to prevent Iran from implementing its plan, then one can estimate that it will take something between eight and 10 years. Assuming Iran has all the input, material and human resources, budget, and technological ability, then eight to 10 years are enough to achieve nuclear capability.

Russian Delegation Arrives To Sign Accord

TA0103191093 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1705 GMT 1 Mar 93

[Text] Boris Saltykov, Russian's minister of science, higher education, and technology policy, arrived in Israel tonight at the head of an official delegation. He will sign a science and technology cooperation agreement. The head of Kazakhstan's Academy of Sciences is also participating in the delegation. Our science and technology correspondent Meron Tzur reports:

[Begin Saltykov recording, in English] It is my first visit in Israel, and I hope that this visit will be successful. The main purpose is to sign an agreement in the field of science and technology. [end recording]

On Wednesday, we will sign a new accord with Israel in scientific fields, such as energy, the environment, medicine, space, social sciences, and economics, Saltykov said. We have a lot in common, and I hope that we will work on joint projects in science and technology, he added. Israel's Science and Technology Minister Shim'on Shetrit added.

[Begin Shetrit recording] There is an enormous potential for scientific cooperation between Russia and Israel. Russia's technological achievements in many fields are the best in the world, and there is definitely room for finding specific areas in which we can try to cooperate in pure research and in applying that research. [end recording]

Professor Sultan Gazin, president of Kazakhstan's Academy of Sciences [name and title as heard], came with the Russian delegation with the aim of learning about Israel's scientific research and studying the possibility of cooperation in the fields of technology, chemistry, mathematics, and space.

Immigrant Minister's Visit to Ethiopia Postponed

TA0303063893 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0600 GMT 3 Mar 93

[Text] The visit of Immigrant Absorption Minister Ya'ir Tzaban to Ethiopia has been canceled due to the objection of the Ethiopian Government. Minister Tzaban was scheduled to depart on a seven-day visit to Ethiopia today. Sources in Addis Ababa told our correspondent Rina Matzliah that the Ethiopian Government wants to maintain a low profile in the issue of the Falash Mura immigration. Minister Tzaban confirmed that he has acquiesced to the request to postpone the visit. Ethiopia's prime minister will visit Israel later this month.

The government is about to implement emergency measures to facilitate the immigration of Ethiopian Falash Mura whose next of kin live in Israel. This was decided by the ministerial committee on the Falash Mura. The Jewish Agency will fly them to Israel. The ministerial committee was informed that the Ethiopian Government refuses to send out the Falash Mura in large groups.

Peace Now Reports Ongoing Settlement Activity

TA0203100193 Tel Aviv 'AL HAMISHMAR in Hebrew 2 Mar 93 p 8

[Report by Betzal'el 'Amiqam]

[Text] A Peace Now team monitoring settlement in the territories has found that new construction work and attempts to establish settlements are continuing, despite the government's decision to freeze building in the territories.

The team uncovered an attempt to establish a settlement, disguised as "an independent neighborhood," 1.5 km west of Kfar Adumim,

Blueprints attest to plans to build 70 housing units and industrial centers and set up the attendant services in Nofey Prat. A study revealed that the Jewish Agency's Settlement Department does not recognize the new neighborhood as an independent settlement. Nevertheless, it receives a regular allocation within Kfar Adumim's budget.

The settlers told the Peace Now team that as soon as the facts have been established in the field, all that will remain will be "to call a spade a spade."

A similar attempt was exposed near Hinanit, in the northern part of the West Bank. Eighteen trailers were placed on a hill 500 meters away from the settlement, under the name Ginanit. The procedure was identical in both cases: After settling on land approved in the blueprint for "the mother settlement" (Hinanit), the latter recognized the independence of "the daughter settlement" (Ginanit). In this case, too, the settlement receives a budget allocation despite the fact that it is not recognized by the Settlement Department.

The Peace Now team reported extensive infrastructure work in Bet Hagay and Na'ale aimed at building dozens of new housing units. Some 36 prefabs have been placed in Itamar, in the Nabulus District, while the construction of 25 housing units began last month in Yaqir. Attempts to expand existing settlements were also reported in 'Ofra and Giv'on Hahadasha.

The follow-up team disclosed that none of the settlements have succeeded in selling all the houses under construction, not to mention the thousands of other houses in the territories that remain empty.

West Bank Granted 'Limited Policing Powers'

TA0103124893 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 1 Mar 93 p 4

[Report by Gabi Brunn]

[Excerpt] All the residents of Jewish settlements in Judaea and Samaria, who take part in watch duties in their settlements, have been granted limited policing powers, which include the right to conduct body searches, detain, and arrest.

This is the gist of a compromise achieved between the State Attorney's Office and the head of the Ari'el Local Council, Ron Nahman, against the backdrop of an appeal submitted by Nahman and the Ari'el council to the High Court of Justice against the commander of IDF [Israel Defense Forces] troops in Judaea and Samaria.

About two weeks ago, Major General Dani Yatom, the IDF commander in Judaea and Samaria, signed an amended order concerning guard duties in the area.

According to the amendment, all the Judaea and Samaria settlements will benefit from the new arrangement.

The amended order states that every settler on watch duty may stop an Arab resident for inspection, search his body, detain, and even arrest him if the guard believes "the search is necessary to prevent jeopardy to human life...or if the guard has reasonable grounds for assuming the man has committed an offense which carries a sentence exceeding three years in prison."

Any Arab entering a settlement but refusing to be frisked or refusing to accompany a guard, may be arrested.

This far-reaching amendment of the existing regulations is designed to give the inhabitants of Ari'el and other settlements legal tools for thorough checks on all Arab workers employed by the settlements in various fields, but mainly in construction. [passage omitted]

U.S. Warning of Terrorist Threats Criticized

Information Minister Comments

JN0303093593 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 3 Mar 93 pp 1, 5

[By JORDAN TIMES staff reporter Ayman al-Safadi]

[Text] Amman—Jordanian officials Tuesday expressed bewilderment at an American statement warning American citizens against "terrorist" threats in the Kingdom.

Information Minister Mahmud al-Sharif asserted there was no fear for tourists and residents in the country, saying that Jordan "is absolutely one of the safest places in the Middle East."

"There is absolutely no reason for them to fear anything here," he told the JORDAN TIMES Tuesday.

The U.S. State Department Monday warned Americans in Jordan against "heightened threats at this time of terrorism," saying information available to the U.S. government "suggest" a threat to Americans in the country, especially those travelling by bus.

U.S. embassy sources in Amman declined comment.

"The statement is puzzling," Mr. al-Sharif said. "I don't see any reason for it."

While government officials would not comment on the motives behind the warning, a political observer who requested anonymity said the U.S. might be fearing repercussions for its failure to deal properly with the question of Palestinian expellees.

The United States initially supported U.N. Security Council Resolution 799, which calls for the immediate return to the occupied territories of about 400 Palestinians expelled to southern Lebanon by Israel in December, but it later brokered a separate deal with Israel that many in the region say falls far short of implementing the resolution.

The U.S. did not do enough to secure the return of the expellees and allowed Israel to get off the hook, said the observer. Accordingly, it is afraid of a reaction, he said.

American citizens interviewed by the JORDAN TIMES Tuesday were also puzzled by the warning.

"I never feel threatened in Jordan. I didn't in the past and I don't now," said an American resident of Amman who asked not to be named.

Saying he did not feel anything unusual in the country, he said "I am bewildered and disturbed" at the warning.

He and another American who talked to the Jordan Times said they need more information on what prompted the warning.

"Is it based on rumours or is it based on substantial evidence?" a U.S. citizen said. He said he would be alarmed by the warning if it was based on solid information "but my guess is that the U.S. government is hypothesizing."

Another U.S. citizen said he believed the American government was exaggerating the situation and that he will not take the warning seriously.

"(U.S. officials) have cried wolf too often for me to take them seriously," he said.

Timing Questioned

JN0303103693 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic 3 Mar 93 p 22

["Just an Opinion" column by Khalid Mahadin: "Why Now?"]

[Text] It seems that the only logical explanation for Mr. Richard Boucher's warning is that the U.S. Department of State thought that such a warning would divert observers' attention from events in sisterly Egypt and the operations aimed against the security, safety, and even the lives of foreigners and tourists. We do not know if there is any other explanation since it is illogical to claim that Mr. Boucher, who is one of the remnants of President Bush's administration in the Department of State, wanted to harm our country. The statement is by an official spokesman and the Department of State is satified with him. However, his announcement does not indicate any political intelligence and it does not reflect the U.S. Secretary of State's commendation of our country and its democratic march. Moreover, it does not reflect statements made by the U.S. ambassador in Amman during a lecture he delivered two weeks ago.

The U.S. Administration, its Department of State, all its officials, and even its official spokesman are aware that our country has always protected its foreign guests, none of whom have been harmed despite the anger expressed by Jordanians over the coalition against their nation, the unjust and continued aggression against Iraq, and the racism which revealed itself before, during, and after the aggression.

Warning Americans living in our country and those who are visiting it only reflects a desire, which we condemn, to harm us. Despite that, this desire will fail because spreading lies will only harm those who repeat them and not those at whom they are aimed. If the U.S. State Department thinks that it can divert attention in our country from political issues followed by our people, then it is totally deluded. The Jordanians are concerned over what is happening in Egypt. They do not support any action that does not emanate from and aims at emphasizing the values and ethics of our nation and the justice of its issues. Moreover, they were not so pleased with the blast in New York and they are very much angry over the double standards used in dealing with Resolution 799 and the unjust resolutions against Iraq.

We ask: Is the warning by the U.S. State Department spokesman the outcome of a personal endeavor or is it the outcome of reports to Washington from its embassy in Amman? If the latter possibility is valid, then we express our deep regret and add: Then, why did Mr. Christopher say all that he did before world news media during his visit to Amman? Moreover, why did the U.S. ambassador say what he did during the lecture he delivered at the invitation of the Rotary Club?

The big question is: Why this U.S. warning now?

Islamic Jihad Deportee Spokesman Discusses Issues

NC0303090493 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0630 GMT 3 Mar 93

[Excerpt] Shaykh 'Abdallah al-Shami, the spokesman for the deportees who belong to the Islamic Jihad in Palestine, has rejected the American plan to resolve their cause. He told our correspondent in the temporary al-Quds camp: We have learned much from the U.S. stance in the region. It is biased toward the Zionist entity and against our people in the region. We have not linked our position with the U.S. policy, because we know that it runs in Israel's favor. Shaykh al-Shami said that all efforts by the United States and Secretary of State Christopher aim to put pressure on the official Arab decision to activate the settlement march and marginalize the issue of the Palestinian deportees.

On the PLO position about Dr. al-Rantisi's insistence on a comprehensive return of the deportees, Shaykh al-Shami said: When the PLO opted for settlement and defeat and linked itself with the official Arab regimes, it no longer represented Palestinian public opinion, which demands the return of its land, dignity, and freedom. We, as Islamic deportees, did not deputize the PLO to speak for us. So any agreement the PLO reaches does not bind us; we will not accept it, because we make our own decisions.

The spokesman for the deportees who belong to the Islamic Jihad in Palestine also said that the heroic operation by one of the movement's mujahidin in Tel Aviv should be emulated by all Islamists, whose arrows must be directed at the heart of this cancerous gland that has been planted in our region to preserve the logic of subservience and capitulation and entrench estrangement among us.

He added: Such heroic acts represent the spirit of the people, the nation, the oppressed, and the poor toward belligerent attitudes in the region. It also strengthens the nails of the oppressed, which claw away at the body of the occupation weighing us down.

Shaykh al-Shami said the operation proves the failure of the security, political, and military theories prevalent in the criminal entity, whose leaders claim they are defenseless. [passage omitted]

Al-Hariri Visits Damascus, Meets With Khaddam

NC0303075493 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0530 GMT 3 Mar 93

[Text] Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri left for Damascus last night and met Syrian Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam and Syrian officials. The visit is part of continuing consultations with the Syrian leadership on the local and regional situations in light of developments and U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's visits to regional countries. Al-Hariri also discussed issues of common concern.

[In a related report, (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic at 0545 GMT on 3 March adds the following: "Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri returned to Beirut from Damascus, where he travelled last night on a surprise visit to meet Syrian officials, principally Syrian Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam."]

Al-Hariri Comments on Deportees, Ties With Syria

NC0203133493 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1130 GMT 2 Mar 93

[Text] Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri has said that security in Lebanon is good and that the Lebanese Government is in control of the situation and has imposed its authority on its territory.

In an interview published in the Kuwaiti newspaper AL-SIYASAH today, al-Hariri said the decision to prevent the Palestinian deportees from entering Lebanon is a Lebanese decision that is supported by Syria. He said Lebanese-Syrian relations are excellent and there is no conflict in their foreign policies.

On the internal situation in Lebanon, Prime Minister al-Hariri said he is working to establish a strong infrastructure and that funds are returning to Lebanon following stabilization. He said the Lebanese currency is strengthening and state revenues are increasing.

Al-Rantisi Seeks UN Council Session on Deportees

NC0203161293 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1500 GMT 2 Mar 93

[Text] Dr. 'Abd-al-'Aziz al-Rantisi, spokesman for the Palestinian deportees, has asked the five big powers to convene a Security Council session to resolve the deportee issue.

He said he has sent a message to Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid about the PLO charge that he is interested only in Resolution 799. Al-Rantisi said in his message: We refuse to link Resolution 799 with Resolutions 242 and 338 or with the negotiating process, which will lead to the elimination of the Palestinian people's rights.

Reasons for Recent Christopher Visit Questioned

NC0303101993 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0630 GMT 3 Mar 93

[Station commentary: "Developments at Meeting With Christopher"]

[Text] In an earlier commentary, we said the objective behind bombs going off as soon as the helicopter carrying U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher from Cyprus landed at al-Yarzah was as much to mask the subject of his talks as to strengthen security measures to protect the American guest. What can we say when everything about the visit fell into a circle of doubt, that

is, until it became the right thing to do to call it a storm sweeping the country during a moment of calm and stability.

This whirlwind visit was a shock to the Lebanese, especially officials, who always volunteer to talk about the supportive and helpful U.S. stance. But nothing compares with the statement from the horse's mouth telling you whether something is true or false. Warren Christopher, who came to al-Yarzah to remind the Lebanese Government of the Syrian presence in Lebanon, ignored the Israeli occupation. He even forgot a resolution on this, passed 15 years ago and approved by Washington—Resolution 425.

Although Ryan Crocker found an explanation as to why Christopher did not mention Resolution 425—claiming it was because journalists did not raise the issue—he did not solve the problem or cancel the entrenched belief that Washington stands wholeheartedly alongside the Zionist aggression and ignores everything connected with this issue. Crocker's diplomacy is far removed from courtesy; it is rude hypocrisy and a blatant attempt to fool others.

The new point we heard is that Christopher asked Lebanese officials to agree to form a security committee to discuss arrangements in the south. The committee Christopher proposed is not part of the mechanism to implement Resolution 425; it is a reference committee the task of which is to discuss how to control the situation in the south while maintaining the status quo and awaiting comprehensive solutions. Clearly, Christopher came to ask for security arrangements not along the Lebanese-Palestinian border, but along the contact line between the liberated areas and the other occupied parts of south Lebanon. Crocker [as heard] came to tell us that the problem in the south lies in the resistance, not the occupation. He also came to say that what is required is to stop and disarm the resistance and control the situation in the south, which cannot be done except by making the Lebanese Army become border guards for the Zionist occupation. Christopher's visit and the proposals he made contain three points all of which are dangerous.

Talking about the Syrian Army's withdrawal is, in one way or another, a call for a Lebanese-Syrian conflict. It is also a call to withdraw from coordination to create an imbalance in relations between the two countries. Talking about a security committee in the south, apart from the conspiracy and fabrication such a proposal creates, is also a call for conflict among the Lebanese. Talk about reconciliation means that the Lebanese reality still has many flaws and that everything achieved so far has great gaps in it as long as there are sides that object to it. According to Christopher's three points, naturally seen from the American point of view, for Lebanon to rectify its situation, it needs a truce with Israel with the possibility of developing the truce into a discussion of bilateral reconciliation. This requires canceling the resistance and dealing it and its followers a blow. Lebanon also needs to stop coordinating with Syria. It needs to restore status and prestige to forces that have a diminished role and that have been rejected by the arena.

Everyone knows this American-Lebanese figure with American characteristics, but the question that persists is: Why have the officials who met Christopher covered up the subject of the talks? Why did they not say that he came to ask us to implement security arrangements in the south? It is not enough to say we have shown our adherence to Resolution 425. What is required is to reveal this scandalous conspiracy and end the effects of this storm, unless, God forbid, there is someone who enjoys working in a storm when tempests are at their mightiest.

Christopher Tour Called Israeli 'Geography Lesson'

NC0203152793 Beirut AL-SAFIR in Arabic
26 Feb 93 p 13

[Muhammad Shuraydah article: "Christopher... and Geography"]

[Text] U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher said before the start of his first tour of the region that he was coming to the Middle East "to listen to the ideas and views of the leaders of the countries he will be visiting." The new U.S. Administration apparently does not know much about the region's affairs; therefore, it was not surprising to see the secretary of state's tour end where it started.

Christopher's aim was to set a date for the resumption of the settlement negotiations, which have been stalled by Israel's refusal to implement Resolution 799, which demands that the Palestinian deportees be returned to their homeland without delay. He did not present any new ideas or proposals to enable the Palestinians to return to the negotiations table. All he offered was a promise to play an effective role after the talks are resumed.

These promises and statements did not come as a surprise; Christopher came to the region with the deal he reached with Yitzhaq Rabin on the deportees. He was hoping to sell the deal to the Palestinians after having succeeded in selling it to the Security Council, which retracted its resolution on the issue. Christopher was hoping to give the Israeli Government more time, which is the essence of the issue: What is being discussed now is whether the deportees will be returned at the end of the year or in three or four months.

While Christopher's failure to achieve progress on resuming the negotiations is nothing new, his statement on the occupied Syrian Golan Heights on the second day of his visit to Israel is noteworthy.

Israel, which understood very well the exploratory nature of Christopher's tour, did not want the U.S.

official to leave ignorant of the topography and geography of the areas in dispute. Therefore, it organized a geography lesson for him, including a helicopter tour of the Golan and the border areas with Lebanon and Syria. In addition, he got a security lesson on the importance of these areas to Israeli security.

After the tour, the U.S. secretary, who described himself as "of the old school, believing that he cannot understand things better until after he sees them," said: "The geography undoubtedly complicates the situation greatly." This signals a major agreement with the Israeli stand on the importance of the Heights for Israeli security.

Christopher's conclusions from this "Israeli geography lesson" become more dangerous when one recalls Resolution 242, which is based on geography on the Israeli withdrawal from the territories occupied after 5 June 1967, and when one remembers how Israel interprets this resolution.

There appears to be an agreement with Israel's attempt to reformulate the bases for the negotiations process, a translation of the full U.S. commitment to Israel's security, and the adoption of the latter's interpretation of Resolution 242. The precedence of changing Resolution 799 and of adopting the Israeli interpretation of it is still alive.

Information Minister on London Talks, Syrian Role

PM0203124993 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 27 Feb 93 p 3

[Samir Nasif report: "Samahah: Resistance Legitimate, But Armed Demonstrations Regrettable"]

[Text] Information Minister Michel Samahah has emphasized that his visit to Britain was fruitful and useful with regard to the political talks he held and to gaining experience in the field of organizing and modernizing the visual, audio, and written media services.

In a meeting with Lebanese journalists in London held the day before yesterday at the Lebanese Embassy, he said: "Britain's positions on our Lebanese and Arab issues are clear. They are precise and fixed, especially with regard to the implementation of Security Council Resolutions 425 and 799."

Answering a question, he said that "Lebanon, which has just come out of a destructive war, is progressing steadily after the al-Ta'if accord restored cohesion in the country and rid it of fragmentation."

On the reason for the selective implementation of the al-Ta'if accord and the difficulty facing the government in finding a mechanism for Syrian redeployment, Minister Samahah said: "Before discussing Syrian deployment we should think about our citizens held by the Zionist entity. And let us get rid of the Israeli enemy. Our and Syria's presence in the Arab League, our distinctive historic relations, the treaty we signed with it, regional conditions, and our own strength—all this causes us not to raise Syrian redeployment at present. True, redeployment is stipulated in the al-Ta'if accord, but we do not want to do anything that would return us to the state of no security." He added: "Until now we have received no help for our Army except from Syria. And I can only thank them for helping us because, had it not been for them, our Army would not have been able to deploy in the south."

Asked about Syria's noncommitment to the treaty stipulating the defense of Lebanon against Israeli attacks, he said: "We should not expect Syria to wage an air and ground war every time Israel attacks Lebanon. It is unrealistic." He emphasized that Syrian assistance in this connection exists and assumes known forms like supporting the Lebanese Army and unknown forms which we cannot discuss.

Regarding the official rhetoric's backtracking on the government's statement, which rejected monopolization of the resistance, and its open support for it and refusal to disarm pro-Iranian Hizballah, he said: "There is no backtracking. There is a minor difference. Hizballah consists of Lebanese, the south is occupied, and the resistance is legitimate. We as a state do not shoulder the responsibility for the resistance, nor do we support, harmonize with, or suppress it. The state will liberate its territory by the available means, and resistance is a secret action whose details no one is supposed to know."

Asked about the suburban demonstration which demanded the execution of author Salman Rushdie and in which armed elements took part, he said: "Hizballah's demonstration can be tackled. What happened in the suburb was regrettable and shameful. Some Hizballah leaders are indignant because of what happened."

Al-Shar' Calls For Deportees' 'Collective Return'

JN0203144693 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1215 GMT 2 Mar 93

[Excerpts] The Council of Ministers held a meeting under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Mahmud al-Zu'bi at 1100 today. [passage omitted]

Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' briefed the cabinet on current Arab and international political developments, the results of U.S. Secretary of State Christopher's tour of the region, the deportee issue and its repercussions on the peace process, and the results of his tour of France and Belgium.

The foreign minister stressed that Syria's stand has always called for the collective return of the deportees to their homeland, as well as the resumption of peace talks to implement Security Council resolutions related to the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestine question. He added that this stand enjoys the respect and appreciation of international quarters.

The cabinet also discussed topics on its agenda and adopted the appropriate decisions.

Need for Israeli Withdrawal From Golan Stressed

JN0203082393 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0545 GMT 2 Mar 93

[From the press review]

[Text] Commenting on regional peace and Israel's anti-peace conduct, today's AL-BA'TH says: Israel does not give a damn about peace and looks forward to war, armament, and threats. Israel continues to conduct experiments on missiles and to acquire nuclear and chemical weapons. All this happens in light of a continued Israeli need to prevent Arabs from achieving peace.

AL-BA'TH adds: Whoever advocates peace gives signals to this effect. The Israeli Labor Party, however, gave away its long-hidden secrets. The daily killing of Palestinians and the daily attacks on Lebanon expose the lies of Israeli leaders.

The paper goes on to say: At a time when the entire world is now wondering about the true Israeli position, Rabin started to give public statements in an attempt to contain the worldwide onslaught against Israeli policy. Israeli leaders, however, will not succeed this time in convincing anybody that the Arabs are the ones blocking the peace process.

AL-BA'TH notes the continued Israeli rejection of international resolutions, most recently, its refusal to return the Palestinian deportees to their homeland.

AL-BA'TH concludes: When Rabin talks about the Golan, he refuses to acknowledge the Syrian Arab right to all the Golan. When he talks about Palestinian rights, moreover, he tries to deny the existence of the Palestinian people on a land called Palestine. When he mentions Lebanon, he deems the Lebanese people's aspiration to liberate their territory an act of terrorism. If this is the way Rabin and his party see things, then how can peace be achieved and how can the peace process continue?

Under the headline "Israeli Withdrawal Must Be Full," TISHRIN says: Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Yosi Beilin has admitted that peace in the Middle East cannot be achieved if the Golan, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip remain under occupation. Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin said, however, that his government is doing its utmost so as not to return all of the Golan Heights to Syria.

TISHRIN adds: Over eight rounds of talks, the Israeli negotiating team has evaded the obligations of the peace process and adopted a policy of maneuvers and procrastination. Syria had made balanced, constructive proposals to make peace intentions a reality on the ground.

TISHRIN goes on to say: Although Rabin has announced Israel's acceptance of Resolutions 242 and 338, he has given wrong interpretations of them, conflicting with the interpretations of the United Nations and all world states.

The paper adds: Syria has repeatedly explained, either through its leader, President Hafiz al-Asad, or through its negotiating team in Washington, that peace is not possible without the return of the Golan in full and the implementation of Resolution 242 to the letter.

The Golan is Syrian territory, and no grain of it can ever be relinquished. Rabin knows deep down that there can be no peace if the Golan and other occupied territories remain in Israel's grip. The Arabs have made huge sacrifices to make peace efforts succeed. It is unthinkable that they will also offer their territories to Israel.

'Compromise Solution' on Golan Heights Rejected

JN0203154593 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1230 GMT 2 Mar 93

[Station commentary]

[Text] Gentlemen: Israeli officials have recently stepped up their talk on the possibility of effecting a partial withdrawal from the occupied Syrian Golan Heights. In one week, Rabin spoke twice about the possibility of withdrawal, but promised that he would do his utmost to not return the entire Syrian heights and to work for avoiding the dismantling of settlements there.

Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres expected a partial withdrawal from the Golan by the middle of this year. His deputy Yosi Beilin is of the view that Middle East peace is impossible while the Golan, West Bank, and Gaza Strip remain under occupation.

Regardless of their aims and the hints inherent in them, these statements constitute a clear Israeli admission that the Golan is Syrian territory and that the Knesset annexation decision was wrong and must be rescinded. Indeed, all of Israel's stands require a profound revision if the rulers in Tel Aviv are looking for peace in the region. Successive stormy events have proven the impossibility of reconciling peace with occupation, served to demonstrate that the continuation of occupation incurs immense human and material losses for Israel, and that repression has not and will never be of any use.

As the Israeli machine of repression and terror failed to undermine the resistance of the people in the occupied territory, half solutions, which Israeli officials have suggested, will not be acceptable and will not receive any response from the Arabs concerned with the peace talks. The Arabs, headed by Syria, look forward to a just and comprehensive settlement in the region and to a firm and genuine peace that would wipe out oppression, repression, and injustice for all time. Naturally, any settlement consecrating the occupation of this or that part of Arab territory and infringing on national sovereignty will not bring safety and stability to the region, but will only engender new and even more serious disputes.

Therefore, Syria explained on all occasions that peace is contingent on a comprehensive Israeli withdrawal from the Golan and the other Arab territories occupied in 1967, that only peace can provide security, and that expansion has never been and will never be a guarantee for security. There can be no security with expansion, no peace with occupation. There can be no compromise solution in the Golan. The Golan must return in its entirety to Syria and to its people who were forced to leave under Israeli intimidation.

We say this amid much talk about the possibility of resuming bilateral talks in Washington in April. Syria has repeatedly rejected separate deals and partial or short-term settlements, and has always emphasized the comprehensive nature of a solution. Syria does not sign agreements at the expense of other Arab sides and does not concede an inch of its territory or haggle over pan-Arab soil. Syria demands the implementation of Security Council resolutions that stipulate the impermissibility of the acquisition of territory by force, Israel's full withdrawal, the illegitimate nature of the settlement drive, solutions which denounce Israeli repression, torture, deportation, and the displacement of Arab citizens. Syria has strongly appealed to the international community to implement Security Council Resolution 799 on returning the Palestinian deportees, and has made it clear that Syria would consider Israel's abidance by this resolution to be a true yardstick of its desire to realize peace.

Rabin is well aware that peace with occupation is impossible, that there can be no peace if the occupied Arab territories are not fully returned to their legitimate owners. However, being an inveterate Zionist, satiated with expansionist ideas and theories, Rabin is trying to grab a piece of territory here and bite another piece there, believing that by dividing Arab ranks he can realize his schemes. Rabin is completely mistaken in this approach because all the Arab sides adhere to the comprehensive and just settlement and to regaining all the occupied territories, affirming Palestinian rights and returning all the deportees.

If Yitzhaq Rabin is really looking forward to fruitful peace talks, he should stop his stalling and maneuvering tactics and heed the requirements of peace, especially complete abidance by UN resolutions.

Foreign Minister al-Shar' Holds Talks in Belgium

WA0203094893 [cross-reference]

For reportage on the visit of Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' to Belgium, including his talks with Belgian Foreign Minister Claes, see the Benelux section of the 2 March West Europe DAILY REPORT.

Afghanistan

Deputy Head of Central Bank Arrested

LD0203152293 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Dari 1330 GMT 2 Mar 93

[Text] Gol Aqa Rahimi, first deputy head of the Afghanistan [Central] Bank was arrested some time ago under an order of the Presidency of the Islamic State of Afghanistan. He was arrested because of his crime and treachery in banking affairs.

A responsible security source told the Bakhtar Information Agency that repeated complaints by the people and state establishments had been reaching us concerning disorder in banking affairs. As a result the security authorities embarked on an investigation of the matter as a result of which Gol Aqa Rahimi was arrested on the basis of incriminating documents regarding treachery. He was handed over to the country's judicial authorities.

The source adds that Gol Aqa Rahimi, in addition to treachery in banking affairs, the creation of disorder and creating obstacles in the way of distributing the salaries of state employees and other customers of the bank, had introduced himself as the representative of the Defense Ministry, had abused this name, and had widened the scope for the continuation of his treachery. Rahimi was not a representative of the Defense Ministry and had no connection whatsoever with that Ministry. [words indistinct]

Coalition Offensive in Baghlan Repulsed

LD0203194293 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0830 GMT 2 Mar 93

[Excerpt] A savage offensive by coalition forces has been repulsed in Baghlan province. The aggressor forces suffered heavy loss of life and material. Quoting a reliable source of [word indistinct] zone, a correspondent of Radio Message of Freedom reports that coalition forces commanded by [words indistinct] launched aa abortive offensive on 26 February against centers of Hezb-e Eslami Afghanistan. During the offensive the coalitionists made extensive use of heavy weapons, but encountered shameful defeat. The report adds that in that successful operation 100 armed men were killed and 36 others were injured. [passage omitted]

'Criminal Commander' in Balkh Province Killed

LD0203195093 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0830 GMT 2 Mar 93

[Excerpt] Abdollah, a notorious and criminal commander of the Supervisory Council, and his four bodyguards were mysteriously killed by unidentified people on 28 February. Abdollah, who been appointed local governor of Nahr-e Shahi district, was a hated figure in Balkh province on account of his unislamic and [words indistinct] deeds. He also had differences with his coalition friends on some issues. The dead bodies of the commander and his guards were found after a long search in a deserted area near the city of Mazar-e Sharif. [passage omitted]

India

Pakistan Move on Human Rights To Affect Dialogue

BK0203152693 Delhi ISI Diplomatic Information Service in English 1432 GMT 2 Mar 93

["Official spokesman's statement on reported move by Pakistan to table a resolution on human rights situation in Jammu and Kashmir at current session of Commission for Human Rights, Geneva;" on 2 March in New Delhi]

[Text] We have received reports that Pakistan is trying to interfere in Jammu and Kashmir by raking up alleged human rights issues in the Commission for Human Rights, which is currently in session in Geneva. They are attempting to introduce a resolution which, apart from recalling previous resolutions of UN Security Council, recommends a fact-finding mission to visit Jammu and Kashmir to investigate and report on the human rights situation there. It also attempts to place the situation in Jammu and Kashmir on the agenda of the commission at its next session. India has taken a firm stand and informed all member countries of the commission that this is totally unacceptable to us and we are opposing introduction of the resolution. We are also pointing out Pakistan's own track record in aiding and abetting violence and terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab. In the event of the remote possibility that such a resolution is tabled and voted in favour, India would not accept it. Pakistan's action in trying to introduce such a resolution will now serve to distance prospects of a fruitful bilateral dialogue between our countries.

Sri Lankan Navy Harassing Fishermen Alleged

BK0203132493 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1230 GMT 2 Mar 93

[Text] The home minister, Mr. S.B. Chavan, today assured the Rajya Sabha that the government will make a statement in the house on security cover to Indian fishermen operating off the Tamil Nadu coast. He was responding to the concern voiced by members over reports that some fishermen who went to Kachchaitivu recently are still missing.

Earlier, raising the issue during zero hour, Mrs. Jayanthi Natrajan, Congress-I; and others alleged that the Sri Lankan Navy has been harassing Indian fishermen. The AIADMK [All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam] members demanded that India should take back the Kachchaitivu Island from Sri Lanka.

Kashmir Militants Kill Abducted Ex-Official

BK0203161293 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 2 Mar 93

[Text] In the Kashmir Valley, militants shot dead the abducted retired assistant commissioner, Mr. Ghulam Nabi Baba, at Sopor today. He was abducted two days ago. Mr. Baba is the second relative of the pradesh [state] Congress-I chief, Mr. Ghulam Rasul Kar, to be killed by militants in two days. As reported, Mr. Kar's brother-in-law, Mr. Habibullah Mirshah, was killed by militants yesterday. Militants also shot at and seriously injured the municipal administrator of Srinagar, Mr. Mohammad Amin Deb, at Solina, Srinagar. Mr. Deb is a close relative of the union minister for tourism and civil aviation, Mr. Ghulam Nabi Azad.

Punjab Militants Surrender to Police 2 Mar

BK0203161493 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 2 Mar 93

[Text] In Punjab, 100 militants, including five hard-core, surrendered before the police at Batala in Gurdaspur district today. With this, the total number of militants who have surrendered has gone up to over 750 during the last one year.

Addressing a meeting after the surrender, the state director general of police, Mr. K.P.S. Gill, said with active public support, normalcy will be restored in the state shortly. He said the operation launched in December last year has entered the final phase now and the next fortnight is crucial. Those who laid down their arms today include the brother of the slain militant, Gurbachan Singh Manochahal. The militants have also surrendered a large quantity of arms and ammunition, including rocket launchers, rockets, SLR's [self-loading rifles], AK-47 assault rifles, and huge quantity of explosive material.

Security Men, Militants Killed in Punjab

BK0303050093 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0435 GMT 3 Mar 93

[Text] In Punjab, five security men and three militants were among nine persons killed in various encounters since last evening. One top militant took cyanide when police captured his van with arms and ammunition in Chandigarh last night. The militant is yet to be identified. According to a police spokesman, the tractor-borne militants killed five security men at a sports function in village Diwala in Sagrur District. The security forces killed three militants in an encounter at village Bobar in Gurdaspur District. A dead body was recovered near Batala.

Country Switches to Unified Exchange Rate System

BK0203161693 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 2 Mar 93

[Text] India today smoothly switched over to the unified exchange rate system, making the rupee fully convertible on trade account. At the close of market hours in Bombay, the dollar was quoted for 32.21 rupees. Agency reports say the dollar fell by 79 paise with heavy off-loading of large foreign exchange held back by exporters. Most foreign exchange dealers described the transition to full convertibility as smooth. It comes three days after the finance minister announced the decision while presenting the budget.

Implications of Dunkel Text for Country Viewed

BK0303052593 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 3 Mar 93

[Commentary by Devarakaunda Ravikant of THE ECONOMIC TIMES]

[Text] The heated exchanges on the Dunkel text in the Lok Sabha yesterday has once again underlined the continued apprehensions held against the new multilateral trading arrangement now being worked out at GATT headquarters in Geneva. At a time when regional trading blocks have come to proliferate the world over, the only opportunity to reverse such a regressive trend is to conclude the Uruguay round at the earliest. But, this is not only the task. The Uruguay round was delayed not by GATT member countries from the south, but the two leaders of the world trade, the United States and the European Community over the issue of agriculture.

In India, the Dunkel text has come under a barrage criticism since last year. Unfortunately, not much light was shed on how the Dunkel text actually affected India's interests in various areas and whether there are any other options open for the government. The government has kept the option of holding negotiations with the leaders of various opposition parties so as to finalize its stand. The Dunkel text comprehensively summarized the results of the Uruguay round of multilateral trade negotiations launched at Punta del Este in Uruguay in 1986. It covers not only rules relating to the conduct of merchandized trade but also new areas not dealt with by GATT such as Trade-related aspects of Intellectual Property Rights—TRIPR's, Trade-related Investment Measures—TRIM's, and trade in services. The agenda for negotiations proceeds on two tracks—one covering trade and goods while the other focuses on negotiations on services. The first track includes negotiations on tariffs, nontariff measures, tropical products, natural resource- based products, textiles, and clothing, agriculture, and trade- related aspects—TRIPR's.

India's difficulties arise largely in the area of TRIPR's, necessitating a complete revision of the Indian Patents Act 1970. Further, the adoption of product patents as

against the existing process patents in drugs and pharmaceuticals would jack up the prices of patented drugs in relation of non-patented drugs. But, in the Indian context, the patented drugs account for only 10 percent while the remaining 90 percent are outside the patents. In regard to Agriculture in the Dunkel text, India's concern is that its interests are not harmed. Even the planned variety protection and patent protection being extended to micro organisms, the government has made it clear that it would insist on exclusion of life forms from patentability. India also did not secure adequate gains in the arena of textiles which is the largest export item now. As regards services, India tends to benefit if its demand for export of labor intensive services is accepted.

Commentary Details Arjun Tank Features

BK0203133993 Delhi All India Radio General Overseas Service in English 1010 GMT 2 Mar 93

[Commentary by N. Bhagya Nair, All India Radio correspondent]

[Text] Indian Army's Main Battle Tank [MBT] Arjun, successfully tested for its automotive and fire power, is one of the best available with any army in the world. Designed to meet the stringent specifications, MBT Arjun represents the translation of advanced design into a reliable and effective weapon system to meet the very threats of the 1990's and beyond. Adopting the most advanced technologies available in the world, Arjun offers the troops in the battlefield a state-of-the-art tank with superior firepower, high mobility, and excellent protection. The 56-and-1/2- ton tank has a 120 mm gun with a 2,100 meter range. This surpasses the range prescribed by the general staff qualitative requirement of Indian Army by 100 meters.

The superior armor, defeating capability of the ammunition, and 120 mm gun give MBT Arjun an edge over contemporary world tanks. The specially designed [word indistinct] armor protects the tank from any counterattack. Due to the high power to weight ratio and low specific ground pressure, the MBT is fast, highly maneuverable, and extremely mobile to cross the most difficult terrains with ease. High acceleration and rapid braking capabilities with excellent steering characteristics make the MBT agile in the battlefield. Adequate fuel storage capacity and the relatively low fuel consumption allow for an optional operational range. An important criterion for the mobility of any combat vehicle is the effective performance of the driver. Excellent vision systems in MBT Arjun provide most effective means of observation in all battlefield conditions. The need to keep the crew's fatigue, including the driver, at the minimum level over long periods of continuous operation has been taken care of.

Arjun is fitted with the latest sight equipment for day and night and can operate in total darkness. The gunner's main sight consoles offer day sight, thermal sight, and a laser range finder and a stabilized head common to all the three channels. The day sight provides dual magnification. The thermal imager provides night vision facility to the gunner and he can observe and engage targets in total darkness. It can even locate the enemy tank in the presence of smoke, dusk, haze, and light camouflage. Integral with the main sight is the laser range finder by which targets can be ranged accurately. The commander can keep an all-round surveillance in the battlefield without removing his eyes from the sight and without being disturbed by the turret motion. MBT Arjun can fire in all modes—static-to-static, static-to-motion, mobile-to-static, and mobile-to-mobile with precision. Besides, the coaxial machine gun acts as a secondary weapon for antipersonnel, antiaircraft, and ground targets. In addition, the antihelicopter (?gun) to combat air threat to armor is also under development.

Arjun has been designed by the Defense Research and Development Organization at its laboratories in Avadi near Madras. The pre- production tanks were built by the Heavy Vehicles Factory in collaboration with public sector units, like BHEL [Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited] and Bharat Earth Movers Limited. Over 70 percent of the project is indigenously developed in the country. The rest, mainly electronic components, are imported, which will gradually be reduced to a minimum. Several Arjun prototypes were tested over different types of terrains before the final run. Automotive trials have established its agility and trafficability in typical cross-country terrain. The weapon system, featuring for the first time a dense packaging of sophisticated optoelectronic surface, has successfully gone through the grueling 1,000-round evaluations. These evaluations are carried out over a period of four years.

The successful integrated mobility and first trials of Arjun conducted recently signals the maturing of India's design and development capabilities in combat vehicles. Addressing army personnel, the defense minister, Mr. Sharad Pawar, said that the development of Arjun reaffirms the country's faith in Indian technologies. The minister said that Arjun will be displayed at the Canadian tank festival next year to explore its export potential. The proven integrated mobility and firepower of Arjun has now put India's MBT on the top of the list with other tanks, like Abrams of the United States and Leopard 2 of Germany having similar capability.

Oil Corporation to Set Up Refinery in Haryana

BK0303095493 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 3 Mar 93

[Text] The Indian Oil Corporation is to set up an oil refinery at Karnal in Haryana. Giving this information in the Rajya Sabha during the question hour today, the petroleum and natural gas minister, Captain Satish Sharma, said that the project is likely to cost 3,868 crore rupees. The minister said it is planned to refine 6 million metric tons of crude oil annually at the project and 1,000 persons are expected to get employment. In reply to

another question, the minister said that the government has decided to disinvest 20 percent equity of the ONGC [Oil and Natural Gas Commission] to mobilize additional resources for its projects. He also informed the house that the government has accepted in principle to set up a southern gas grid.

Iran

Sudanese Minister Arrives for Visit 27 Feb

LD2702185393 Tehran IRNA in English 1835 GMT 27 Feb 93

[Text] Tehran, Feb. 27, IRNA—Sudan's Minister of Cabinet Affairs Ahmad al-Jaz arrived here today with a message from President 'Umar Hasan al-Bashir to President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani.

Upon his arrival at Mehrabad Airport, he said the West especially America is trying to pressure Sudan because of its Islamic policies.

The Sudanese president noted in Khartoum last week that accusing his country of supporting 'terrorism' and of setting up training centers for Islamists or allowing in the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps of Iran are "fabrications by those who oppose Sudan's move towards an Islamic government".

Presidential Deputy for Legal and Parliamentary Affairs, 'Ata'ollah Mohajerani who welcomed the Sudanese minister said at the airport that international developments warrant Iran not to distance itself from Sudan's problems.

Mohajerani hoped that al-Jaz's visit to Tehran would consolidate Tehran-Khartoum relations.

Meets Hashemi-Rafsanjani

LD0103143793 Tehran IRNA in English 1409 GMT 1 Mar 93

[Text] Tehran, March 1, IRNA—Sudanese Minister for Cabinet Affairs, Ahmad al-Jaz here today submitted President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani a message from President 'Umar Hasan al-Bashir of Sudan.

Al-Jaz briefed Hojjat ol-Eslam Rafsanjani on the plots of arrogant powers against the Sudanese Muslim nation and said Western powers were creating problems for Sudan in a bid to undermine Islam in that country.

The Sudanese official who arrived here Saturday [27 February] last called for expansion of cooperation between the two countries in line with their mutual interests.

President Rafsanjani in reply described Tehran-Khartoum relations as "excellent", and stressed on the territorial integrity of Sudan.

Northern African nations, he hoped, would work out a just solution for their differences by friendly and peaceful means.

President Rafsanjani who in December 1991 made a trip to Sudan at the invitation of President Bashir, thanked the latter for his message.

Slovenian Foreign Minister Arrives on 2-Day Visit

LD0103065493 Tehran IRNA in English 0625 GMT 1 Mar 93

[Text] Tehran, March 1, IRNA—Slovenian Foreign Minister Lojze Peterle, heading a delegation, arrived here on a two-day official visit Monday [1 March].

The Slovenian minister will discuss Tehran-Ljubljana ties, economic cooperation and the situation in Bosnia-Hercegovina with high-ranking Iranian officials.

Upon arrival, Peterle expressed hope that Slovenia would open its embassay in Tehran in near future.

During his stay here, he will hold talks with the Iranian president, the parliament speaker and ministers of mines and metals, industries and heavy industries.

Meets Petroleum Minister, Seeks Oil

LD0203190793 Tehran IRNA in English 1619 GMT 2 Mar 93

[Text] Tehran, March 2, IRNA—Slovenian Foreign Minister Lojze Peterle in his meeting with Iranian Minister of Oil Gholam Reza Aqazadeh here today, said his country is interested in purchasing 500,000 tons of Iranian oil annually.

Peterle who arrived here Monday [1 March] also discussed Iranian cooperation in reconstruction of an oil refinery in his country and also in building a new one.

It was decided that the matter would be considered after necessary studies and a visit by Iranian experts to Slovenia.

Cooperation Memorandum Signed

LD0203221093 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 2030 GMT 2 Mar 93

[Text] A memorandum of understanding for cooperation was signed between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Slovenia. The memorandum was signed by our country's Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati and Slovene Foreign Minister Lojze Peterle in the latter's last meeting in Tehran.

In the memorandum the two sides stressed the need for international and regional bilateral and multilateral cooperation. The two sides also agreed to cooperate in the UN and other international organizations, to cooperate in cultural and economic fields, and to open a Slovenian embassy in Tehran in the near future.

In the memorandum the Islamic Republic of Iran agreed to the sale of copper and 500,000 tonnes of oil to Slovenia, as well as the transfer of aluminium technology from that country to Iran. Other items of understanding between the two foreign ministers included joint investment for the construction of 3,500 and 5,000 ton tankers and joint production of turbines.

Minister Hails 'Fruitful' Visit

LD0303095593 Tehran IRNA in English 0924 GMT 3 Mar 93

[Text] Tehran, March 3, IRNA—Slovenian Foreign Minister Lojze Peterle wrapped up his two-day visit to Iran Wednesday morning [3 March] and was seen off at the airport by his Iranian counterpart 'Ali Akbar Velayati. During his stay here he held talks with President Hashemi-Rafsanjani, Majles Speaker Nateq-Nuri and several other high-ranking officials.

A protocol and a letter of understanding for diplomatic and economic cooperation were signed between the two countries at the final round of talks here Tuesday. According to the protocol, Iran and Slovenia would exchange visit and views on international and regional issues. The protocol also underlined mutual cooperation in parliamentary fields as well as at international organizations.

The Slovenian president, parliament speaker, ministers of transport and oil would visit Iran in the near future, the protocol disclosed. It also announced the opening of Slovenia's embassy in Tehran. Meanwhile, according to the letter of understanding, Slovenia would purchase lead and 500,000 tons of crude oil from Iran. It also embodied such areas as transfer of aluminium-related technology to Iran and joint ventures for the production of oil tankers and power-plant turbines.

Before his departure, Peterle told IRNA that the two sides agreed on the regular exchange of visits between foreign ministers of the two countries. He noted that the agreements signed during his visit here would provide suitable grounds for further bilateral cooperation in future. On the opening of his country's embassy in Tehran by mid-June this year, Peterle said it would surely play an important role in the strengthening of bilateral ties. He expressed satisfaction over his visit to Iran and said both in his former position as the prime minister and his present status as foreign minister, he had never had such fruitful talks in any of his foreign visits.

Pointing to Slovenia's valuable expertise in dam construction, telecommunication, light and heavy industries, Velayati said the two countries had agreed on mutual cooperation in such fields. On diplomatic ties and international and regional developments, the Iranian minister said that both Iran and Slovenia shared identical stands on the Balkans topic. Both countries supported struggles of Muslims in Bosnia-Hercegovina for the restoration of their rights, he added. Pointing to the fact that Slovenia was currently hosting 70,000 Bosnian refugees, mostly Muslims, Velayati lauded Slovenia's humanitarian stand in this connection.

More Convoys of Relief Supplies Leave for Bosnia

LD0203172093 Tehran IRIB Television Second Program Network in English 1415 GMT 2 Mar 93

[Text] Iran has sent 200 tonnes of relief supplies to the suffering people of Bosnia over the last four days. According to the IRNA, a 90-tonne convoy, including cooking oil, sugar and flour, bought in Croatia by the Iranian Embassy, left Thursday [25 February] and reached its final destination in central Bosnia. Another 100-tonne convoy left for central Bosnia yesterday.

Islamic Involvement in SFRY War Crimes Tribunal Urged

LD0203192093 Tehran IRNA in English 1646 GMT 2 Mar 93

[Text] Tehran, March 2, IRNA—Head of the judiciary Ayatollah Mohammad Yazdi here today called for active participation from Islamic states in the planned setting up of an international tribunal for trying war criminals of the former Yugoslavia.

Ayatollah Yazdi in a letter to Secretary General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) Hamid al-Ghabid termed the Resolution 808 of the United Nations Security Council as "the first practical step by the body for the trial of war criminals in the former Yugoslavia.

"This could be a prelude to the establishment of a permanent tribunal, at least in Islamic countries, to investigate international crimes particularly oppressions of powerful countries against Third World countries," he said in the letter.

He said setting up the tribunal for the trial of criminal elements in Bosnia-Hercegovina will be "a positive move by the international community to make up for the damages inflicted on the republic.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran considers this tribunal as a good opportunity for restoring the rights of the oppressed Muslims in Bosnia-Hercegovina," said the ayatollah in the letter.

Turkmen Culture, Tourism Minister Arrives

LD2802100193 Tehran IRNA in English 0921 GMT 28 Feb 93

[Text] Gonbad, Mazandaran Prov., Feb. 28, IRNA—Turkmen Minister of Culture and Tourism Geldymurad Nurmukhamedov, crossing Marz-Pol borderpoint, arrived here in this northern province Sunday [28 February].

The Turkmen minister, heading a high-ranking cultural delegation, is in Iran on a two-day official visit at the invitation of Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance 'Ali Larijani.

The Turkmen minister told IRNA upon arrival that his visit aimed at the development of Tehran-Ashkhabad ties.

The two sides will sign agreements on mutual cooperation in the field of tourism and on regular exchange of cultural and sport delegations.

Seeks Help Restoring Cultural Sites

LD2802221793 Tehran IRNA in English 1807 GMT 28 Feb 93

[Text] Tehran, Feb. 28, IRNA—Visiting Turkmen Minister of Culture and Tourism Geldymurad Nurmukhamedov, here today requested Iran's cooperation to renovate cultural-historical sites in his country.

In a meeting with Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati, Nurmukhamedov thanked Iran for helping pave the way to the tomb of Turkmen poet Makhdoom Qoli.

He reiterated Turkmen President Safarmurad Niyazov's willingness to promote Tehran-Ashgabat ties.

Nurmukhamedov referred to celebration of religious holidays in Turkmenistan including Nowruz the spring equinox (March 21) which marks the start of the Solar Hijri calendar year in Iran and other neighbouring Muslim countries, and invited Iranian artists to participate in the Nowruz festival in Turkmenistan.

Velayati in return stressed on importance of bilateral ties and underlined boosting of cultural cooperation. "Exchange of artists by the two countries will pave the ground for further promotion of mutual ties", he added.

Later in the day, Nurmukhamedov met with Deputy Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance 'Ali Jannati [name as received] who stated that exchanging tourists between the two countries will be boosted if related facilities are provided in the near future.

Presently tours are available for the two countries' citizens who wish to visit either Ashgabat the Turkmenistan or the holy city of Mashhad in Iran's Khorasan Province.

The Turkmen minister heading a high-ranking cultural delegation is in Iran on a two-day official visit at the invitation of Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance 'Ali Larijani.

Cultural Agreement Signed

LD0203211593 Tehran IRNA in English 1745 GMT 2 Mar 93

[Text] Tehran, March 2, IRNA—Iran and Turkmenistan today inked a 16-point agreement according to which the two sides will cooperate in various cultural fields.

The agreement was signed by Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance 'Ali Larijani and the visiting Turkmen minister of culture, art and tourism Geldymurad Nurmukhamedov.

According to the document the two countries will set up cultural centers and associations and launch efforts to revive Persian language and literature in Turkmenistan. They also agreed to cooperate in different fields including arts, book exhibitions, sports competitions and exchange of tourists.

The cultural pact includes cooperation among the two countries' news agencies, radio and television, press and national libraries.

Bangkok Embassy Denies Involvement in Saudi Murders

BK0103024793 Bangkok BANGKOK POST in English 1 Mar 93 pp 1,3

[Text] The Iranian Embassy in Bangkok yesterday issued a statement denouncing terrorism and "vague speculations" that it was involved in the murder of Saudi diplomats in Bangkok.

The embassy said the statement was issued in response to Friday's [26 February] press conference given by the the Interior Minister and the Deputy Permanent Secretary for Interior on the investigation of the murder of Saudi diplomats in 1989 and 1990.

The government investigating committee on Friday alleged that one of the gunmen slipped into the compound of a foreign embassy after the murder of three Saudi diplomats in 1990.

The Iranian Embassy statement said the Interior Minister's press conference "have deliberately placed vague speculations that the Islamic Republic of Iran has been engaged in that event. The Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Bangkok would like to strongly condemn any terrorist act and reemphasise that any baseless and irresponsible statements would not contribute to the existing friendly relations between" Thailand and Iran.

Meanwhile, Deputy Foreign Minister Surin Phitsuwan yesterday insisted that relations between Thailand and Saudi Arabia are "warming" up." "This is because Thailand has shown its sincerity in solving the unsolved cases, especially the murder of the four Saudi diplomats in Thailand in 1989 and 1990," he said.

The minister said the new round of investigations is about to be concluded and Saudi Arabia will be handed hard evidence by Thai officials to back up the cases in the next few days.

Convicted Saudi jewel thief Kriangkrai Techamong yesterday insisted he will not go to Saudi Arabia to re-enact his crime.

Kriangkrai, who has completed his prison term, was speaking while protected by about 10 policemen at his home in Lampang.

If Saudi Arabia wants him to re-enact the crime, it must send its officials to meet him in Thailand where he will be willing to cooperate.

A stage could be modelled on a Saudi prince's palace and he would repeat the theft.

"Saudi Arabia wondered why I was able to enter the bedroom without breaking the door and the windows.

"I have a little secret trick to enter through the window," Kriangkrai said.

He claimed he was treated unfairly by the investigation team led by Pol-Lt Gen [Police Lieutenant General] Thanu Homhual, saying the team threatened and indirectly forced him to cooperate.

While he was in prison his wife was arrested at the Northeastern Bus Terminal.

He said he was asked by an investigation team headed by Pol-Gen [Police General] Chalor Koedthet to return the jewellery to the police for the sake of the country.

Acceptance of Majles Vote on Sa'idi-Kia Urged

LD0203094193 Tehran IRNA in English 0806 GMT 2 Mar 93

[Text] Tehran, March 2, IRNA—The English daily "TEHRAN TIMES" Tuesday [2 March] commented on the no-confidence motion tabled by 40 Majles deputies to question Minister of Roads and Transportation Mohammad Sa'idi-Kia who is to appear before the Majles today.

The editorial called for the "wholeheartedly" acceptance of the votes to be issued by the people's representatives in the Majles today.

It referred to the recent statements by President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani who expressed hope that the Majles' vote of confidence would preclude any problems arising for the country and for the five-year plan prior to the presidential elections next June.

Addressing the president, the daily wrote that the no-confidence motion against a minister "who does not have a key role will not deal a blow on the upcoming presidential elections even if he is impeached. It will rather be completely the opposite of this."

It also stressed that the dismissal of a minister would not deal such a blow on the five-year plan. "It will be a weakness of the plan to face a serious problem due to shuffling a manager at the level of the minister of roads and transportation."

The article deplored the fact that after successive events which fell under the domain of the Roads and Transportation Ministry and had led to the loss of tens of lives, none of the top-ranking officials of the country had taken part in a press conference to explain for the people the reasons behind those flagrant mistakes.

"For the preservation of the system and sublimation of the words of Imam (Khomeyni) who said, 'the votes of the people are determining and decisive,' let us wholeheartedly accept the votes issued today by the people's representatives in the Majles whatever these may be," the editorial concluded.

Meanwhile, interviewed by IRNA here Monday, Sa'idi-Kia stressed that after the leader of the Islamic revolution, the Islamic Consultative Assembly (Majles) was the highest authoritative body in the Islamic republic.

He reiterated that Majles deputies were legally rightful to interpellate a minister.

"Once the Majles lose confidence in a minister, it can no more fully support him. Thus another person, backed by the Majles can take the post," he noted.

The minister said that he would submit a report on the investigations made by the commission on the aviation accident in Tehran, to the open session of the Majles Tuesday.

Sa'idi-Kia has apparently attended several sessions of the Majles during the past two weeks to answer questions raised by the Roads and Transportation Commission.

On his ministry's inefficiency to absorb the budget allocated to relevant development projects, he said, "I am sure that Majles deputies are not provided with full information."

He explained that his ministry had always absorbed more than 90 percent of the allocated credits and that in certain cases it had borrowed from the presidential special account to meet the required expenditures.

Asked what was his feeling when he heard of the Majles no- confidence vote, Sa'idi-Kia said that he viewed the issue as a routine subject, adding that he was subordinate to the Majles views.

Sa'idi-Kia Responds to Impeachment Motion

LD0203115093 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 2 Mar 93

[Text] The impeachment call by a number of Majles deputies against the minister of roads and transport [Mohammad Sa'idi-Kia] was raised at today's open Majles session. According to our correspondent, six deputies who had called for the impeachment, noted in their speeches today: The purpose of the impeachment call is to clarify the reasons behind the incidents such as the air crash and the collision of two passenger trains.

The deputies also emphasized the need for planning and measures to prevent such incidents. The deputies claimed in their remarks that weakness in the area of management is the chief and major reason for the occurrence of these incidents.

According to the report, Roads and Transport Minister Sa'idi-Kia expressed condolences to those who had lost their families in the passenger air crash. In reply to the remarks made by the deputies, he described how the passenger airliner crash had happened and stressed: With the inspection of the contents of the black boxes belonging to the planes that crashed, and which were sent to Moscow, the main reason why the accident took place has become clear and will be communicated to the people. He also replied to other issues raised in the impeachment motion, including management changes; implementation of regulations and the manner in which the Ministry's existing resources were used. According to this report, the Majles will be continuing discussion on the impeachment of the Transport Minister and voting on this issue at this afternoon's session.

Blames Air Force for Crash

NC0203154993 Paris AFP in English 1324 GMT 2 Mar 93

[Text] Tehran, March 2 (AFP) - Iran's transport minister on Tuesday [2 March] implicitly blamed the air force for the mid-air collision last month of a civilian plane and a Sukhoi-22 fighter-bomber that killed 134 people.

Mohammad Sa'idi-Kia, questioned by parliament, said the pilot of the Tupolev passenger plane which took off from Tehran's Mehrabad Airport was not to blame for the accident over the Iranian capital. The pilot made no error and the Tupolev, which was heading for the eastern city of Mashhad, was right on course, Sa'idi-Kia said, citing initial results of an inquiry.

The minister also cleared civilian air controllers, saying the flight plan and take-off procedures had been "perfectly-well respected." The full results of the investigation will be published soon, he said.

His remarks were seen as pointing the finger of blame for the February 8 crash at the air force, which is in charge of military air traffic at Mehrabad Airport. Civilian and military officials control traffic and security at the airport, where separate but parallel runways are laid out for them.

The air crash was the worst ever in Iran. The 132 passengers of the Tupolev as well as the two crew members of the Sukhoi-22 were killed.

Retains Majles Confidence

LD0203164193 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1530 GMT 2 Mar 93

[Excerpts] The Majles deputies this afternoon gave a vote of confidence to Mr. Sa'idi-Kia, minister of roads and transport, to remain in his position.

The impeachment call of a number of deputies against the minister of roads and transport was raised at today's open session of the Majles which continued from this morning into the afternoon session. According to our correspondent, first, six of the deputies who had called for an impeachment noted in their speeches that the impeachment was aimed at clarifying the reasons for the occurrence of incidents like the air crash and the collision of two passenger trains. The deputies also stressed the need for planning and action to prevent such incidents.

In response to the remarks made by the deputies, the roads and the transport minister referred to how the passenger air crash occurred, and he stressed that with the inspection of the contents of the crashed plane's black box, which has been sent to Moscow, the principle reason for the incident will be clarified and communicated to the people. [passage omitted]

After the explanations given by Mr. Sa'idi-Kia, voting by ballot was taken from 242 of the deputies. The counting of the votes showed that the 121 negative votes cast for the dismissal of the roads and transport minister were insufficient to reach the necessary quota. According to the Guardian Council's definition of the constitutional principles concerning impeachment, voting should take place with regard to the request for a vote of no confidence.

Defense Minister on Military Procurement, Budget

LD0203153993 Tehran IRNA in English 1440 GMT 2 Mar 93

[Text] Tehran, March 2, IRNA—Western states led by the U.S. have launched propaganda on the alleged access of Iran to nuclear weapons in order to sell the weaponry left from the Persian Gulf war to the regional countries, Minister of Defence and Armed Forces Logistics Akbar Torkan said here Monday. Speaking to IRNA he said during the Persian Gulf war west transferred more than 30 million tons of weaponry to Turkey, Saudi Arabia, the occupied Palestine and some other regional countries in one of its biggest military expedition since the Second World War. "A large amount of these weapons have remained in the region, whose return to its original sites involves huge expenses, and therefore, west is trying to sell them to the regional countries through wide-scale propaganda," Torkan said.

He said the recent clashes between the U.S. and Iraq took place on the same ground and in an effort to overshadow the contracts inked between the U.S. and the regional countries. On the western claims regarding the existence of a large amount of chemical weapons and long-range missiles in Iraq, Torkan said west is well aware of the amount of the remaining chemical warfare and missiles in Iraq, "since they (western countries) themselves provided the weapons to Iraq."

More on the same issue, he said west has decided to demolish the remaining weapons in Iraq in order to

remove Saddam because the westerners do not like these weapons to be used by the popular government which will come to power in Iraq after Saddam. Having knowledge of this, Saddam is trying to relocate the remaining weapons in order to survive longer.

On the alleged Iranian efforts to obtain nuclear weapons, he said access and use of nuclear weapon is not included in the defence strategy of the country. "We are also trying to maintain and preserve the existing weapons in the country, and we don't need to purchase new weapons," he added. Noting that new arms purchase will not boost Iran's military strength, Torkan said "our power is in our faith and in the boldness and devotion of our youth. This power has been boosted several fold thanks to the Islamic Revolution's Guards Corps, Basijis and experience of an eight years of defence."

On the defence budget of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Torkan said this budget will amount to dlrs. 850 million next year (to begin March 21), the lowest as compared to the defence budgets of the regional countries. "The Saudi Arabian defence budget is over dlrs. 16.5 billion, 20 times of that of Iran, while population of Saudi Arabia is about one fourth of Iran's." He linked the new military contracts between regional countries and allied countries to the coming to power of Democrats in the United States, and said since Democrats came to power due to their slogan of global democracy, they have to force regional countries to establish a parliamentary system, but at the same time they have to keep current regimes in power in order to receive the money for the sold military weapons.

On the sale of the so-called dual-use technology by the seven industrialized countries to Iran and its impact on the Iranian military programs and defence industries, Torkan said Iran had no plan to purchase arms in future, so this embargo has no impact on our military power. "We are trying to boost the scientific capability of our armed forces, and we also know how to use our industries," he said.

Asked on the purchase of Russian submarines by Iran, Torkan pointed to the purchase of American and German submarines by the previous regime, and said two Iranian submarines were seized while they were under Iranian flag. "We purchased the submarines on the basis of the same plan."

Denying Western media reports that an Iranian plane and a ship carrying arms to Bosnia-Hercegovina under the cover of a charity organization had been seized, Torkan said no Iranian plane or ship has been seized. Torkan also refuted reports that Iran has sent Iraqi planes to Sudan, and reiterated that Iran has not given any plane to Sudan. On the current disputes between Iran and United Arab Emirates over the Iranian island of Abu Musa, Torkan said on the basis of the 1971 accord maintaining of security in the island rests with Iran, and in this regard Iran banned entry of foreign nationals to the island. "Of course we have no problem with the Emirates, and we know that this hue and cry has been launched by certain members of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council, and we are aware of their talks," he said.

Elsewhere he said Iran has become self-sufficient in production of equipment for the ground forces, and noted that the Islamic Republic is now looking for markets to sell its products. He also added that the Defence Ministry would become engaged in production of non-military commodities in future.

Ahmad Khomeyni Praises Relief Committee's Efforts

LD0203201093 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 2 Mar 93

[Text] Hojjat ol-Eslam val-Moslemin Seyyed Ahmad Khomeyni made a speech at a meeting with officials of the Imam Khomeyni Relief Committee who had gone to see him on the occasion of the anniversary of the issue of the decree by His Eminence Imam Khomeyni—may he be admitted to God's paradise—for the formation of the Relief Committee. He said: The illustrious imam always loved the deprived people in society and sincerely prayed for those who were engaged in service and relief work. He added: Thanks be to God, today the Imam Khomeyni Relief Committee with its brilliant record has taken positive and constructive steps toward the relief of deprivation, and it is a source of hope.

In another part of his speech, Hojjat ol-Eslam val-Moslemin Seyyed Ahmad Khomeyni described the course of the economic and social development of the country and welfare work as acceptable and positive and added: Today, more than at any other time, our society needs unity, harmony, sacrifice, and efforts. He said: Our society is faced with many difficulties and problems. In order to solve the existing problems and to achieve the goals of the system and the revolution, all of us should perform our duties in the best possible way. We should pray to God Almighty that the esteemed president, Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani, as the executive head of the country will be successful in his economic and social programs so that he can really solve the economic and social problems and take essential steps for the deprived people and for all members of society.

In conclusion, Hojjat ol-Eslam val-Moslemin Seyyed Ahmad Khomeyni said: Thanks be to God, today the people and the officials of our system are among the purest and noblest human beings and this is the most valuable resource of our system when compared to other systems in the world.

Pakistan

Further Reportage on Afghan Islamabad Talks

Ishaq Khan on Possible Terms

BK0203154693 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 1500 GMT 2 Mar 93

[Text] President Ghulam Ishaq Khan has appealed to all rival factions in Afghanistan to observe cease-fire as a

first step toward a political settlement of the present issues and give the current efforts in this connection a chance. He was talking to Afghan President Borhanoddin Rabbani who called on him at the president's house this evening.

President Ghulam Ishaq Khan reaffirmed that Pakistan does not want to impose any solution on Afghanistan, it only wants to use its influence to help overcome the differences between Afghan brothers. Expressing his personal ideas about a possible solution, the president proposed setting up a military commission for monitoring the cease-fire, organizing a national armed forces, and arranging the laying down of heavy weapons by all sides. The president also proposed setting up another commission to decide on the distribution of power between the president and the prime minister and appoint a cabinet consisting of those who participated in the jehad and other main groups of the Afghan population. President Ghulam Ishaq Khan proposed setting up an election commission to decide on modalities of elections and take necesssary steps to set up a representative government in a true sense in Afghanistan.

The president reaffirmed Pakistan's firm determination to work for the establishment of peace in Afghanistan and said it fully supports Afghanistan's sovereignty and integrity. He added we desire excellent relations with Afghanistan based on the recognized international principles on inter-state relations.

The meeting, which lasted for about an hour, was held in an extremely cordial and brotherly atmosphere.

Foreign Secretary Gives Briefing

BK0203165893 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1600 GMT 2 Mar 93

[Text] The Afghan Government and opposition leaders, now in Islamabad, held a series of day-long meetings with Pakistani leaders. Later, briefing newsmen about the meetings, the foreign secretary, Mr. Shaharyar M. Khan, said there is considerable advance between the Afghan Government and opposition on some issues and there are some differences on certain issues. However, the differences are narrowing down so that they are able to reach a solution of the prevailing situation in Afghanistan. He added that there is a desire on the part of all the parties in the Afghan conflict to move toward a final solution.

The president, Mr. Ghulam Ishaq Khan, suggested the setting up of an election commission to decide upon the mode of elections and to take necessary measures to bring into being a truly representative government in Afghanistan. The president reiterated Pakistan's commitment to peace in Afghanistan and respect for its integrity and sovereignty. He also reaffirmed the desire to have the best of relations with Afghanistan based on the internationally recognized principles of state behavior. The meeting, which lasted for about an hour, was held in a cordial and fraternal atmosphere.

Earlier, Professor Borhanoddin Rabbani held talks with President Ghulam Ishaq Khan without anyone else being present at the meeting. They were later joined by their respective delegations. The meeting was followed by an iftari [Ramadan fast-breaking] dinner hosted by the president in honor of President Rabbani. It was also attended by other Afghan leaders including Engineer Golboddin Hekmatyar, Mowlawi Nabi Mohammadi, Sheikh Asif Mohseni, Karim Khalili, Saudi Prince Turki al-Faysal and special envoy from Iran, Dr. 'Alla'eddin Borujerdi, besides federal ministers, services chief and diplomats from Muslim countries.

Hekmatyar Arrives 2 Mar

LD0203143693 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0830 GMT 2 Mar 93

[Text] This morning Brother Hekmatyar, mojahed leader [amir] of the Islamic Party [Hezb-e Eslami] of Afghanistan, arrived at the head of a large convoy in Pakistan where he was received by Pakistan's government authorities and thousands of refugees. According to a report of the Afghan News Agency, Brother Hekmatyar, escorted by hundreds of motor vehicles and all the senior officials from Nangarhar arrived at Torkham border post. There was a guard of honor of Border Militia of Torkham waiting for him at 0730. The political agent and other Frontier [Province] officials were present. Qazi Mohammad Amin Waqad and members of the executive committee of the Islamic Party of Afghanistan were there to welcome mojahed Brother Hekmatyar. Later Brother Hekmatyar reviewed the guard of honor, and afterward he moved to Peshawar in the company of tribal leaders, ulema and officials of the Islamic Party of Afghanistan. Mojahed Brother Hekmatyar arrived in Peshawar at 1000 along with his entourage. He was received in Peshawar with great warmth by refugees and local residents and senior provincial officials of the [Northwest] Frontier Province Government. Full security arrangements were made by security forces of the government of Pakistan along the highway. The convoy was escorted by a large number of motorcycles and motor vehicles of local traffic. The report adds that Brother Hekmatyar, accompanied by the leadership and officials of the Islamic Party, left for Islamabad this morning while they were escorted by hundreds of motor vehicles, to take part in talks for the formation of a government that will be acceptable to all sides. It is said that leaders of all jehadi organizations will participate in the negotiations.

Tehran Reports Meeting

LD0203184493 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 2 Mar 93

[Text] The first joint meeting of Afghan mojahedin groups which has been convened in Islamabad with the mediation of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan ended this afternoon after three hours of exchanges of opinion.

[Correspondent] The meeting was attended by Golboddin Hekmatyar, Mawlawi Mohammad Nabi Mohammadi, Sebghatollah Mojaddedi, Karim Khalili, Mir Seyyed Ahmad Gilani, Ayatollah Mohseni and representatives of the leaders of other Afghan mojahedin groups. The issue of the establishment of a permanent cease-fire in Afghanistan and the ending of the attacks on Kabul were among the most important issues discussed by the leaders of the mojahedin groups. All the participants stressed the need for the establishment of stability and security in Kabul. There are no further details available about the other main topics raised in these three-hour long discussions.

On the other hand, Mr. Borujerdi, deputy foreign minister of our country in charge of Asia and Oceania, continued his meetings with the leaders of the Afghan mojahedin groups this afternoon when he met Mir Seyyed Ahmad Gilani, leader of the National Islamic Front of Afghanistan, and exchanged views about the current talks in the capital of Pakistan for ending the clashes and the solving Afghan problems.

During the meeting Mir Seyyed Ahmad Gilani welcomed the help of the Islamic countries for solving the problems of Afghanistan through mojahedin groups [as heard]. Expressing his worries about the current political situation in Afghanistan, he added: We still have a long way to go before we can establish stability and security in Kabul.

Mr. Borujerdi explained the stance of the Islamic Republic of Iran regarding developments in Afghanistan. Stressing that every opportunity should be seized in order to end the clashes in Afghanistan, he said: We hope that the leaders of all mojahedin groups will strive for a successful conclusion of the Islamabad meeting through open-mindedness and compromise.

Progress in Afghan Talks

LD0203232893 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 2030 GMT 2 Mar 93

[Text] We start our foreign news with a report by Khamene, our correspondent in Islamabad, on the second round of the talks between the Afghan mojahedin groups which have started in Islamabad with the mediation of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan:

[Khamene] The talks between the Afghan mojahedin groups with the aim of removing the differences between the pro- and antigovernment groups continued in Islamabad, Pakistan's capital, on Tuesday. On the second day of these talks Borhanoddin Rabbani and the representative of Abdul Rasul Sayyaf on the one side, and Sebghatollah Mojaddedi, Pir Sayyed Ahmad Gaylani, Mawlawi Mohammed Nabi Mohammadi, Ayatollah Asef Mohseni, Karim Khalali, and Golboddin Hekmatyar on the other continued their talks and exchanges of views.

In these talks, which were held in the absence of Yunes Khales or his representative or officials from Pakistan, the representatives of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Saudi Arabia were also present. However, the representative of the National Islamic Movement of north Afghanistan, led by General 'Abdol Rashid Dostam, has so far not arrived in Islamabad to take part in these talks. This is the first international effort to solve the Afghan clashes since the mojahedin came into power in Kabul .

Pakistani Deputy Foreign Minister Shaharyar Mohammad Khan, in an interview tonight, explained the framework of today's meeting between the leaders of the parties opposed to the Government of Bornahoddin Rabbani. He said: In their talks today the leaders of opposition parties agreed that in case the disagreements were removed and amity was established among all the groups, they would put an end to the clashes in Afghanistan and would try to set up a national army with the formation of a military commission.

He added: The collection and removal of heavy weapons from Kabul, as well as relieving the capital of Afghanistan from being within range of missile attacks, are among the agreements which have been reached.

Pakistan's deputy foreign minister said that the implementation of these agreements would depend on the solution of all the differences existing between various Afghan mojahedin groups. He added: The powers of the president and the prime minister, the allocation of responsibilities for a number of important ministries, including defense, interior, national security, and foreign affairs, the length of the presidency of Borhanoddin Rabbani, and the method and time of choosing the next president of Afghanistan are among the differences which still exist. In the talks which will continue tomorrow, efforts will be made to bring the views of the leaders and representatives of the mojahedin groups closer together.

At the end of the interview, Shaharyar Khan said that the continuation of fighting in Afghanistan would result in the destruction of that country. He added: It seems that the efforts are moving in a positive direction.

More on Talks; Hekmatyar Meets Sharif

BK0303033193 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 0200 GMT 3 Mar 93

[Text] The Afghan Government and opposition have reacted positively and encouragingly to a basic point suggested by Pakistan for a durable solution to the Afghanistan problem. Both sides held day-long meetings with the Pakistani leaders yesterday. After five rounds of talks held by the Afghan president and opposition leaders, as well as special emissaries from Saudi Arabia and Iran, with President Ghulam Ishaq Khan, Prime Miniter Mohammad Nawaz Sharif, and the Pakistani team, Foreign Secretary Sharyar Khan said there is concensus on certain issues and differences have narrowed on others. He said Pakistan is satisfied with the

outcome and believes that differences will narrow further today because both sides want to resolve the crisis through dialogue. After two days of talks, it has come to light that both sides desire resolving all issues in order to avert war, rocket attacks, and bombings. He said both sides agreed to revamp the Afghan National Army and set up a military commission to monitor any future cease-fire violations. They also agreed to protect Kabul from rocket attacks and surrender heavy weapons to a central military command. They expressed readiness to open all borders and roads as well in order to facilitate the transport of goods inside and outside Afghanistan.

The foreign secretary said the stand of the Afghan Government, led by President Rabbani, is that the presidential election held by the Council of Resolution and Settlement provides a legal basis for the government. He insisted on maintaning the sanctity of the Council of Resolution and Settlement. According to the Afghan opposition, it does not recognize the election of President Rabbani because the council is nonrepresentative. Besides, there are differences of opinion on the modalities and time frame of the election of the Grand Assembly. However, these differences are narrowing. The foreign secretary said that to overcome the differences, it was suggested to set up a commission of leaders to determine the modalities of elections. The foreign secretary said no side rejected this idea. He said another major difference between the two sides is on the cabinet portfolios. There is a view that five or six important departments should be distributed among various political parties and a designated person from each party should hold an important portfolio in the cabinet. He said that during their meeting with the Afghan leaders, both the president and the prime minister made it clear that a solution to the entire issue should be suggested by the Afghans themselves, and Pakistan does not want to impose a solution on them.

Afghan leader Engineer Golboddin Hekmatyar called on Prime Minister Mohammad Nawaz Sharif in Islamabad yesterday evening. He was with the prime minister for some time and exchanged views with him on the Afghanistan problem and matters pertaining to the resolution of the current crisis.

Tehran on Military Commission Plan

NC0303074593 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0430 GMT 3 Mar 93

[Text] The warring Afghan groups continued their talks in Islamabad yesterday. Our colleague in Islamabad says Borhanoddin Rabbani; 'Abdol Rasul Sayyaf's representative; Sebghatollah Mojaddedi; Pir Seyyed Ahmad Gaylani; Mowlavi Mohammad Nabi Mohammadi; Ayatollah Asef Mohseni; Karim Khalili; and Golboddin Hekmatyar participated. Representatives of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia also attended.

Pakistani Foreign Secretary Shahryar Khan told our Islamabad correspondent: The leaders of the Afghan mojahedin groups have agreed to a cease-fire. Yesterday's talks decided that if differences can be ironed out and a cease-fire is established, a military commission could be set up to form a national army.

Shahryar Khan said the talks appear to be treading a positive course. 'Alla'eddin Borujerdi, Iranian deputy foreign minister for Asia and Oceania, said last night that Iran will supervise the cease-fire only if the leaders of the Afghan mojahedin groups display a genuine desire for peace. He added: The distance between word and deed is great. We will wait until we see results.

Sharif: Talks 'Progressing Very Well'

BK0303112893 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1100 GMT 3 Mar 93

[Text] The prime minister, Mr. Mohammad Nawaz Sharif, held talks in Islamabad today with the Afghan president, Professor Borhanoddin Rabbani, and the chief of Hezb-e Eslami, Golboddin Hekmatyar. The two Afghan leaders also had face-to-face meeting following the efforts of Mr. Mohammad Nawaz Sharif.

Later, talking to newsmen, the prime minister said the intra-Afghan dialogue was progressing very well and hoped they will be able to reach an agreement very soon. The prime minister said all factions of Afghan mojahedin agreed that the war in Afghanistan should come to an end and all of them should work together for stability of the country.

Hekmatyar on Leader Possibilities

LD0303115493 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 3 Mar 93

[Report from Islamabad by Voice and Vision correspondent]

[Text] Talks between the Afghan Government and leaders of the jihad groups continued in Pakistan's capital today to find a solution to that country's problems. A few hours ago President Borhanoddin Rabbani and Islamic Party [Hezb-e Eslami] leader Golboddin Hekmatyar, the most important opponent to his government, met and conferred at the Prime Ministry building in Islamabad. In the course of this meeting, also attended by the prime minister of Pakistan, the main topics at issue between the two sides, including the composition of the cabinet, the method of holding elections and also Rabbani's status as president, were discussed.

At the conclusion of this meeting, which is the first such meeting between the main warring factions of Kabul, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif of Pakistan termed the talks between Rabbani and Hekmatyar as positive. He added: All the jihad groups have given a positive reply to the current efforts in Islamabad. This is the best opportunity for these groups to end the clashes in Afghanistan.

Meanwhile, Mr Borujerdi, our country's deputy foreign minister for Asia and Pacific affairs, who is in Islamabad at the head of a delegation to attend the peace talks between the Afghan jihad groups, met and conferred with President Borhanoddin Rabbani today. In the course of this meeting, Mr Rabbani thanked the Islamic Republic of Iran [IRI] for its efforts to solve Afghanistan's problems and for helping that country's government and people. He expressed hope that the current efforts toward solving the Afghan conflict will bear fruit and will restore tranquillity and everlasting peace in that country.

Mr Borujerdi also met with Golboddin Hekmatyar this morning and discussed the latest developments and political situation in Afghanistan. The two sides stressed the need for abandoning short-sightedness and for the participation of all the jihad groups in running the country's affairs to solve the existing problems and for restoration of stability in Afghanistan. During this meeting Golboddin Hekmatyar emphasized: We believe that Iran, our friendly and neighboring country, can play a fundamental role in solving Afghanistan's problems. He added: To solve the current problems in Afghanistan, we accept chairmanship of any of the leaders who is accepted by the majority of the jihad groups.

Mr Borujerdi, too, at this meeting, reiterated the IRI's support for the territorial integrity of Afghanistan and pointed out: The main decision on Afghanistan's issues must be taken by the Afghan groups, and the neighboring countries should not refrain from offering every assistance to solve this problem.

Official Optimistic on Talks

BK0303164893 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1600 GMT 3 Mar 93

[Text] The Pakistan foreign secretary, Mr. Shaharyar M. Khan, told a news conference this evening that differences between the Afghan Government leaders and opposition groups has been very considerably narrowed down as a result of talks by the prime minister with all the leaders individually and the meeting between the prime minister, President Rabbani, and Mr. Golboddin Hekmatyar. He said the prime minister first met individually with President Rabbani twice and once with Mr. Golboddin Hekmatyar, which was followed by a joint meeting of the three leaders. Later, the prime minister along with the minister of state for foreign affairs, Mr. Mohammad Siddique Khan Kanjoo, briefed the Afghan leaders who are out of the Afghan government. He said the prime minister has made a personal contribution toward narrowing down differences between mojahedin factions and said there is a continued positive, constructive, and accommodative attitude from all sides. He said with the narrowing down of differences, they can look with some optimism to a successful outcome of the talks. The foreign secretary, however, said there are still one or two important matters to iron out, including the need for unanimity, as Pakistan and all the mojahedin factions feel that there should be a unanimous decision. The foreign secretary hoped that by tomorrow they may have a significant advance in the talks.

Sharif: Afghan Groups Close to Agreement

BK0303150293 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1400 GMT 3 Mar 93

[Text] The prime minister, Mr. Mohammad Nawaz Sharif, has said intra-Afghan dialogue is progressing very well and we are close to an agreement to be achieved with a little more effort. He was talking to a group of newsmen after having crucial talks with Afghan President Professor Borhanoddin Rabbani and Hezb-e Eslami Chief Mr. Golboddin Hekmatyar in Islamabad today.

At first, the prime minister today held talks with the Afghan president, Mr. Borhanoddin Rabbani. It was the third meeting between the two leaders since Monday. The intra-Afghan dialogue organized by Pakistan is meant to promote a durable peace in Kabul among major Afghan political groups. The prime minister is making hectic efforts to find an Afghan solution to the Afghan crisis.

After his meeting with the Afghan president, the prime minister met separately with Hezb-e Eslami Chief Mr. Golboddin Hekmatyar. Their talks were constructive and positive. Pakistan has told the government and the opposition groups from Afghanistan that it did not want to impose any solution on them. They have been explained that Pakistan has no favorites among the warring Afghan groups. Pakistan's sole aim is to bring a permanent end to the fratricidal fighting in Afghanistan so that the people of that country are able to reap the fruits from the 14-year jihad against a former superpower.

After having separate meetings with President Borhanoddin Rabbani and Mr. Golboddin Hekmatyar, the prime minister was able to bring the two Afghan leaders face to face. It was through the mediatory efforts of the prime minister that both President Rabbani and Mr. Hekmatyar met with each other and held talks on the 'Afghan crisis. The Prime Minister's house sources said that President Rabbani and Mr. Hekmatyar discussed the unresolved issues of the Afghan crisis. The Afghan leaders discussed the legitimacy or otherwise of the Shura-ye Hal Wa 'Aqd [Resolution and Settlement Council], distribution of the important cabinet portfolios, and allocation of powers to the Afghan prime minister. The two Afghan leaders in their direct talks discussed whether the electoral process should take place through a shura or jerga or a separate mission. The sources said the tenure of the present Afghan president also figured in the talks.

Later, talking to newsmen, the prime minister said that all the factions of the Afghan mojahedin agreed that war

in Afghanistan should come to an end and all of them should work together for the stability of their country.

[Begin recording] [Nawaz Sharif] We have had very constructive talks with President Rabbani and then also with the other leaders. It is a very good occasion that both the leaders—President Rabbani and also Hekmatyar—have met today. So, they will also be meeting the other leaders, and we hope that we will be able to reach an agreement very soon.

[Unidentified correspondent] Are you closer to an agreement than you were last night?

[Sharif] Yes, we are quite close to an agreement. Yes, That's right. [end recording].

A group of Afghan leaders called on the prime minister in Islamabad today and discussed with him matters relating to the Afghan issues. The prime minister informed them about his discussions with other Afghan leaders. The leaders who met were Prof. Sebghatollah Mojaddedi, Mowlawi Nabi Mohammadi, Pir Seyyed Ahmad Gaylani, Sheikh Asif Mohseni, and Karim Khalili.

Editorial Praises U.S. Action To Help Bosnians

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[Editorial: "Clinton takes up a noble challenge"]

[Text] At long last, there is some hope now that Bosnia may be rescued from what has been the most unabashed crimes against defenceless human beings, the worst sufferers being women. Impartial sources have estimated that the number of women gangraped by Serbians, mostly armed soldiers, is around the shattering figure of 30,000. History does not have many examples of such beastiality. Nor of the indifference to human suffering on a scale as displayed by nations on the European continent. The Serbians have gone about their planned massacre and "ethnic cleansing" without let or hindrance. In some quarters there is a feeling that if the Russians have not actively helped the Serbians in their savage onslaught on Bosnia-Hercegovina, they have been giving them political backing. And they continue to do so. Seen in this disagreeable context, US President Bill Clinton's earnestness in trying to do what is right to restore sanity to the heart of Europe merits welcome. It is a great relief indeed to note that a young Democrat in the White House is willing (and let's hope also able) to teach the European hypocrites some elementary lessons in human decencies.

The tragedy of Bosnia-Hercegovina is already the lowest watermark for European civilisation and culture. Mr Clinton would be an optimist if he thought that he is going to receive smooth cooperation from his European allies in bringing peace and justice to Bosnia-Hercegovina's sadistically decimated people. And the virus which has demented the Serbian thugs and their horrendous barbarities is no longer confined to Serbia. It is insidiously spreading to the other parts of the Balkans. This is a region notorious for violence and bloodthirsty vengeance. One is simply amazed that at the end of the twentieth century, crimes against humanity and irredeemable savagery should be the order of the day at the centre of Europe and no European nation or government should turn a hair. The United States has often led the Western world on moral issues. Once again the US has that role to play and one feels so relieved and reassured that President Clinton ascended to the moral high ground to accost his European allies who have been acting as spectators in what is about the worst crime against humanity in the twentieth century. This is no exaggeration because it is universally recognised that what the Serbian savages have done in a few months, Hitler's fascist predators could not do in more than a decade of one of the most heartless dictatorship.

The task for the United States is pretty clearly cut out. But it is not going to be easy for the simple reason that European governments would, at best, be silent and inactive partners. There is no evidence as yet that there has been any change of heart in Europe. The Russians are making no secret of their cold shoulder for President Clinton's plans to stop genocide, prevent hostilities and restore peace, sanity and justice. The Bosnians have already told the world that what they fear is a "Second Spain" in the Balkans. So far nothing has happened in and around Bosnia- Hercegovina to suggest that thes fears are not well founded. The only silver lining is President Conton's initiative.

President Clinton would do well to let his allies, with inert conscience, understand that he is not only determined to do what is right but that he has also the will to finish this great task with all speed. It should not be difficult for President Clinton to persuade Arab rulers to provide financial support, if nothing else, to the American initiative. The trouble that threatens the very existence of Bosnia-Hercegovina is not confined to that tiny republic of the defunct Yugoslav federation. This ugly and blood- guzzling octopus has its tantacles already spread out in all directions, covering the whole of the Balkans. The rumblings can be heard in Macedonia and, mind you, Albania is not very far. If not checked now, the conflagration will take these two entities in its consuming flames. And reaction in all decent communities of the world would be one of uncontrollable revulsion. In the process seemingly deadwood comity of Muslim nations might wake up. You never know when sleeping titans return to life. After some initial dithering president Clinton has put himself on trial and taken up a noble challenge. People of goodwill everywhere are with him. It is a very long time since leadership of the United States has responded to the call of humanity in distress.